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SOCIETY

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The street connection

In the rage against the drug barons, the small dealers who trade hard drugs on the streets of the unemployed get ignored—not least by the police. But control them and you control the drug problem

John Pilger remembers the forgotten Australians

Making the Greater Germany

Alice Walker on the making of her new novel

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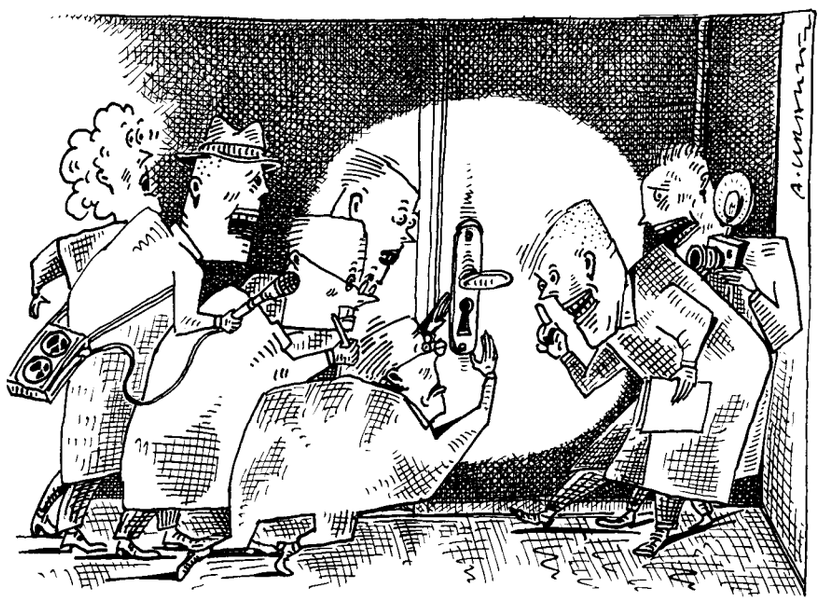
EDITORIAL

Bedroom farce

Everything you always wanted to know about sex but weren't allowed to ask



Andrezj Krauze

It is unusual, to say the least, for a British prime minister personally to cancel a proposed survey that has already been approved by scientists and the relevant department. But this week Mrs Thatcher vetoed a national survey of sexual behaviour.

The organisers, the Health Education Authority and the Economic and Social Research Council, seemed reputable enough. They planned to interview 20,000 people about their sex lives and the projected cost was a mere £750,000—hardly enough to produce a modest privatisation TV commercial.

It might have been thought that the case for finding out about British sexual behaviour in the light of the Aids crisis scarcely needed arguing, but Downing Street was not impressed and produced a plethora of objections. It was an invasion of privacy. It was also a waste of public money; we already know enough about the subject and, what is more, it wouldn't even produce accurate information. The lady doth protest too much.

Some apologists have argued that a survey of this kind is no longer necessary since the rate of HIV infection in Britain now appears to have peaked. The projections made by medical authorities, especially for infection among heterosexuals who do not inject drugs, proved wildly exaggerated. Thus now we need a reduction of hype and, in the words of the *Daily Mail*: "not more information but more commonsense in interpreting the data we already have."

But the insufficiency of accurate data was, at least partly, responsible for the inaccurate projections. It may also be, because of our lack of adequate current data, that the current "peaking" may be a statistical illusion. We cannot know without wider research. Currently the sole weapon we have in fighting Aids is knowledge. If those who are at risk can alter their behaviour, then the spread of the disease can be slowed. This can only be achieved by real information, not rumour or archaic sermonising.

But there is method in the prime minister's authoritarianism. The only real precedent for a survey of sexual behaviour on this scale is the Kinsey report. In December 1948, Professor Alfred Kinsey of Indiana University published the results of his survey, entitled *Sexual Behaviour of the Human Male* (it was followed by a similar survey of female sexual behaviour in 1953).

Professor Kinsey had questioned a sample of 5,300 men on their sex lives and the results had a shocking effect on Americans' view of their own sexuality. At a time when wholesome Andy Hardy films were still among the most popular in America, Kinsey revealed that 90 per cent of his male sample masturbated and a startling 37 per cent had achieved orgasm with another man. For the first time a strictly scientific survey had shown how little relation the culture's sexual stereotypes bore to reality. The effect it had on American society is almost incalculable.

One of the crucial components of Mrs Thatcher's jerry-built philosophy is the portrayal of the family as its principal unit. "There is no such thing as society," our prime minister has said, "only individuals and their families." Families are also the principal repository of our most decent values.

It's a potent myth, but one that has been eroded by the reality of the Thatcher years. When we think of the family today we are as likely to think of divorce and child abuse as Christmas dinner round the tree. Furthermore, the Aids crisis has focused attention on a once-hidden world of non-monogamous sexual contact.

Now Mrs Thatcher has decreed that enough is enough. It's not that a disinterested survey would intrude on people's private lives or deceive policymakers; the truly frightening prospect is its potential accuracy. What if it disclosed that the true minority in our society is the happy nuclear family? The logic of Granthamism is that there are myths so important that they must not be challenged, even by the truth.

There is one more lesson for the rest of us. The Kinsey reports had a profound, but arguable, effect on American society. But what they did for the Indiana University Press was beyond question. Both became international best-sellers, unprecedented in academic research, and put a once obscure university press on the map.

This may be a time for academic researchers to display the entrepreneurial energy that the government has demanded for so long. The project is relatively cheap and the resulting report, of unprecedented size and detail, would, properly packaged, achieve a massive sale. It could pay for itself in serialisation rights from the prime minister's favourite popular newspapers alone. Does anyone want to make a lot of money, and upset Mrs Thatcher at the same time?

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Loyal to whom?

At every turn in the Northern Ireland conflict, actions by the security forces have given the IRA fresh life. From police attacks on civil rights marchers, through the bungled introduction of internment, Bloody Sunday, children's deaths from plastic bullets, to the RUC's "shoot to kill" policy, army and police behaviour has pushed angry or despairing Catholics into the terrorists' arms. Even some constitutional Nationalists would argue that without these recurrent blunders the IRA might not exist today.

Suspicion of collusion with Loyalist murder gangs has always massed around the Ulster Defence Regiment. Formed as a direct descendant of the notoriously sectarian 'B' Specials, more overwhelmingly Protestant in membership than even the police, it would be distrusted by many Catholics almost whatever it did. Some in its ranks have given this fear substance; this week with revelations of information leaks to Loyalist killers, and the appearance of two UDR men on murder charges. They are the latest in a long line: 16 members of what Mrs Thatcher this week called "a very, very, very brave group of men" have been jailed for sectarian murders.

The language of "divided loyalties" has often been used to describe the UDR's problem. The real difficulty is the opposite: many members of the Regiment do not have *sufficiently* divided loyalties: their off-duty loyalty to an embattled Unionist community subverts their duty to act as neutral defenders of the peace. Some obviously see the Loyalist paramilitaries as basically decent lads whose enthusiasm carries them a bit too far. Some are too enthusiastic themselves. Now the prime minister's blanket endorsement has given comfort to the regiment's rotten elements.

Let there be light

How many *NSS* readers have bought or received one of the 350,000 hardback copies of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time* sold during its 64-week stint at or near the top of the British book charts? And how many of them have read it? Whether understood or not, science writing for a curious lay audience is passing through a golden age. James Gleick's *Chaos* rivals Hawking as a coffee-table adornment. Gifted popularisers such as Richard Dawkins, Stephen Jay Gould and Oliver Sacks bring excitement and eloquence to the frontiers of research. This week's Sheffield meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science coincides with the city's unique Science Festival, designed to demystify the delegates' working worlds. But scientists will still wonder, as they do every year, if outsiders really know, and love, them. British science must conquer two related types of challenge. One is practical, political, and now familar: falling student applications, the cash-starvation of basic research, a flight of talent overseas, and the lure of market-led technologies. The second, often a hidden cause of immediate symptoms, is a matter of culture and belief. As science's historians would say, its image over the last three decades has undergone a paradigm-shift. Exit the benefactor of mankind; enter the designer of doom, belching pollutants and bristling with weaponry.

Responses to new or newly-perceived emergencies—from Aids to global warming—offer specialists a chance to regain wider esteem. They should not aspire to win back their postwar place atop a pedestal. High theory now tells us of conflict and uncertainty in the structure of the universe. We need to learn more about the contest for position and prestige within science's own institutions. In a sceptical age, an invitation to share others' doubts and struggles wins friends—and could influence more people than the old aura of infallibility.

The numbers racket

As with other debates on rights and freedom, the government is now taking the lead on crime. Its message is clear: the numbers of people sent to prison must be reduced. Long a cause for the left because of degrading and inhumane conditions, ministers have now taken up the cry. With Turkey, we have the highest proportion of people in prison in Europe and it is increasingly expensive to maintain them. Faced with a costly expansion of prison places begun in 1983 and due to continue into the mid-1990s, the government has now accepted "punishment in the community".

A forthcoming white paper will seek to ensure that prisoners serve at least half their sentence before parole, rather than the present third, and all are released under some form of supervision. But unless sentence lengths are reduced, this will mean a rise of about 4,000 inmates. To win judicial backing for what will be seen as a threat to the courts' independence will be difficult. Meanwhile, public support for a move towards shorter sentences from a "law and order" government is already being sought with gusto. Patten is arguing that non-custodial sentences are really terribly tough and punitive. At the same time, he is busily promoting the fact that recorded crime overall went down by 6 per cent in the last 12 months, thereby disguising a marked leap in violent crime (12 per cent rise) and sex offences (up 6 per cent). Crime statistics are notoriously confusing. Any change in penal policy must go hand in hand with a real effort to clarify them. At present, the disputed figures are no more than small-arms in the government's propaganda war.

Right approaches

The government's new policy for the local management of schools (LMS)pirouettes on a number of principles—including parent power. "The right people will be taking the right decisions," said the junior education minister, Angela Rumbold, in July. "Schools will become more responsive to the needs of the community they serve."

At Springfield School in Birmingham the community being served is up in arms. And nobody is pleased. At a school where 90 per cent of the pupils are Asian a teacher, who can speak neither Urdu nor Punjabi, has been appointed to liaise with the community. Parents, some of whom cannot speak English, are threatening legal action if the teacher is not removed. This, according to Les Byron of the Labour-controlled education committee, is mob rule: "Threats of any nature do not have any effect in British society."

The government's local management policy will be introduced into schools next April. Local education authorities "will not have to intervene directly in the details of how institutions are run". But Tory attempts to devolve power have all sorts of strange results. Parent power, when really exercised from below, worries those above—of all political persuasions. Springfield school, with its Asian majority, has a predominantly white governing body and staff. The 200-strong parents' group is not protesting at this. Parents say that race is not the issue; they just want to be able to understand the teacher appointed. A simple request has become a racial confrontation. Angela Rumbold should be jubilant that the right people are making their voices heard.

If we must pay for government propaganda, it should at least work. This spring's campaign for the new Family Credit benefit, we now know, cost £4.8 million. Thanks to the obscurity of the ads and curbs on eligibility, numbers of successful claimants rose less than drastically, from 253,000 to 263,000. Why not cut the red tape and just give every new applicant an extra £480?

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LETTERS

Life in the community

Sean French ("Diary", 1 September) writes of the Thatcher government "thrusting the mentally ill into the 'community'." I am not sure how typical I am of the average ex-mental patient, but eleven and a half years ago (during a Labour government) I was "thrust" out of a mental hospital (with much trepidation on my part) into a rehabilitation hostel in Worcester. I had spent 16 years in the hospital (from age 24 to 40) and it had become my whole world, but, after two years in the hostel, I moved to a council flat, where I have lived ever since (nine and a half years).

I lead an intensely solitary life (apart from four or five phases of manic activity) and, although I miss the sense of being part of a larger whole, I feel much more "normal" and free than I ever did in hospital, constantly surrounded by my fellow-sufferers and the authority of the staff. I am very aware that a great many ex-patients are far less fortunately placed than myself, but I personally now welcome the fact that I was "thrust" out.

Name and address supplied

Painting history

In her recent review of Gerhard Richter's exhibition, 18 Oktober 1977 ("The uncivil dead", 1 September), Amanda Sebestyen claims that the ICA has "locked these pictures in an art-historical deep-freeze". Yet it is Sebestyen who wants to tie the pictures down. She demands facts, insists on information. But the paintings raise questions rather than make statements. Their unsettling pathos and melancholy render both the potted history and the histrionics of Sebestyen's review inconsequential.

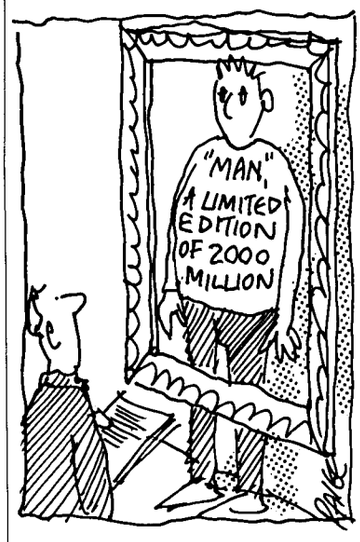
While there is no doubt that Richter was seeking to raise questions about the possibilities of history-painting today (does not the title *18 Oktober 1977* consciously echo the titles of Goya's paintings *The Second* and *Third May 1808?*), neither he nor the ICA has sought to exclude other considerations. Both the catalogue and the gallery guide contain an extensive interview with Richter in which he articulates with clarity and dignity his attitude to the Red Army Faction, and his motivation in making the series of paintings. In addition the catalogue includes essays by the German historian Stefan Germer and the art historian Gerhard Storck which discuss the pyschological and political repression of these events in recent German history. It is perhaps worth adding that both the installation at the ICA, and the associated publication, were made in close collaboration with the artist.

Richter's fundamental position is that of a reopening—of discussion about the deaths, about the rise and fall of the Red Army Faction, about the beliefs and illusions of utopian politics, and equally about how painting can represent history, and indeed whether it is possible to make a contemporary history painting.

These are important questions, and it is a cause of regret that Sebestyen is unable to approach them with a comparable openness.

James Lingwood and
Iwona Blazwick
Institute of Contemporary Arts
London SW1

The age of plunder



Stuart Cosgrove says rightly, we are living in the age of plunder ("In praise of plagiarism", 1 September). The reason for this is obvious. The world is running out of not only fossil fuels and other material resources, but of ideas, and ways to express them, and musical notes. It has already been forecast that we shall run out of original tunes by the end of the century, prior to which time popular music will consist of re-issues, re-makes and songs comprising bits of everything else.

To plagiarise the next column by Stephanie Williams, ("Manhattan transfer", 1 September) it does seem that we are playing our last round, and unless we are dealt a different hand of cards it is inevitable that everything will be the same old thing reshuffled.

I bet someone's written most of this before.

Katie Mallett
Meynell Avenue
Canvey Island
Essex

Unpalatable truths

Your editorial assertion ("Holding the baby", 1 September) that "it is an unpalatable truth that we live in a racist society and that black children will, in general, be better prepared for it in black families" seems to me a smug generalisation and an "unpalatable" one precisely because it holds out no hope for those suffering under the existing situation. It seems analogous to a statement such as "the Jews will be *safer* inside a walled ghetto".

Anyone who has watched black, white and Asian children playing together regardless of racial origin will, I imagine, be offended at the idea of such narrow-minded fatalism being imposed upon them.

Richard Davoll
City Road
Bristol

Mother and child

I have just renewed my subscription to the *NSS* but now wish I hadn't bothered. "Holding the baby" (1 September) really turned my stomach. It is quite cruel, arrogant and wrongheaded.

I am a long-time reader of the *NSS* with two daughters and four grandchildren. The person who wrote your article either knows nothing at all about the psychology of babies and young children or else simply doesn't care about the intense emotional suffering that has been caused this baby; because, make no mistake, it is a completely traumatic experience for any young child to be removed from a loving mother/mother substitute. It most certainly *is* institutional child abuse and all the more wicked for being quite unnecessary. The local authority now seems to be conducting a smear campaign against the foster mother, although the judges in the case said there had been no criticism of the way she looked after the baby. I don't suppose we'll be getting any reports on the baby's progress now. It's all too confidential. I would like to have a look at his weight card. I think it would be quite an eye-opener.

Despite what you say, this has been done to satisfy the daft and racist "same race placement" theory that will be out of fashion in a few years' time. Short-term fostering for babies and young children is bad policy, and same-race placement obviously makes it more difficult to find long-term fosterers and adopters. The most damaging thing that can happen to a child is to be pushed from pillar to post in its early years.

You seem to have gone overboard for baby snatchers with bees in their bonnets. Look at your attempts to make a heroine of Dr Marietta Higgs. The motivation behind this is a hatred of the mother role and a denial of its importance to young children.

Peggy Tyler
Sentimental, Melodramatic Granny
Felixstowe
Suffolk

The truth at last

As a reader of the *New Statesman* since the 1930s I am surprised that you have not yet mentioned the BBC2 television programme *Summer of the Bomb*.

In that programme, shown on 9 August, an American historian, Dr Gar Alperovitz, revealed new documents proving that the Japanese government had secretly offered to surrender in May 1945 on condition that it could keep its Emperor as a constitutional monarch. This was allowed to it in August.

If that May offer had been accepted, the atomic bombs would not have been used.

Telling the world that those bombs *had* to be used, because of the hundreds of thousands of American lives that would be lost in an invasion of Japan, was a clever trick that could only work so long as some important government documents were kept secret.

If there is no longer any valid excuse for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, they will have to be recognised as the greatest atrocity in world history and that will perhaps make it less likely that they will be repeated.

Alec Lea
Church Brow
Bolton Le Sands
Lancs

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Perils of Pearce

In 1987, Edward Pearce told your readers that if they listened carefully, they would hear the first sound of Tory tumbrils rolling for Margaret Thatcher. As I said to him, anyone who thought that was actually hearing loose pieces bumping around inside his own cranium.

However, I feared that Mr Pearce could succeed in misleading some of your readers, who might credit the opinions of a journalist claiming knowledge of and sympathy for the Conservative Party. Thus it is with his comments on the *Sunday Telegraph* ("The perils of Perry", 8 September).

From the moment he took office until the end of his tenure of power, Peregrine Worsthorne edited the *Sunday Telegraph*. He initiated, inspired, vetoed; he took all the key decisions. Of course, Perry did not go around London wearing green eye-shades, but the idea that he was a *roi fainéant* is risible, as anyone who worked under him would testify.

Your author makes Perry's editorship sound like gothic horror; Mr Pearce derived those qualities, not by studying the *Sunday Telegraph*, but by looking in a mirror.

I regard Mr Pearce's views of others' work with contempt, so I would be unmoved by his claim that I am "not strictly a writing journalist at all" (sic), except that it reminds me of the most humiliating period in my newspaper career. When I joined the *Sunday Telegraph*, one of my duties was to assist in the editing of Mr Pearce's copy.

This involved slashing through thickets of metaphor; dividing sentences into three in a desperate effort to render them intelligible—and above all, correcting the spelling. The more pretentious Mr Pearce's reference, the more certain it was that all the key words would be misspelt. He should never use the word "culture" without reaching for his dictionary. I do not know whether someone really is employed to follow the horses at the Lord Mayor's Show with a bucket and shovel; if so, I understand how he feels.

Three or four years ago, before he was sacked by that magazine, Mr Pearce wrote in *Encounter* that Margaret Thatcher would not lead the Tory party into the next election. "Remember you read it here first" he continued. We do, Mr Pearce; we remember it well.

Bruce Anderson

Ambiguous outcome

I am afraid that, because I was abroad on holiday when the proofs came through, my review of Donald Cameron Watt's splendid *How the War Came* ("And the war came", 1 September) contained an unfortunate printing error. The relevant sentence should read "Watt's explanation of the outcome is unambiguous", not, as alas! appeared, "ambiguous". Apologies to author and readers.

Kenneth Morgan
Aberystwyth
Dyfed

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

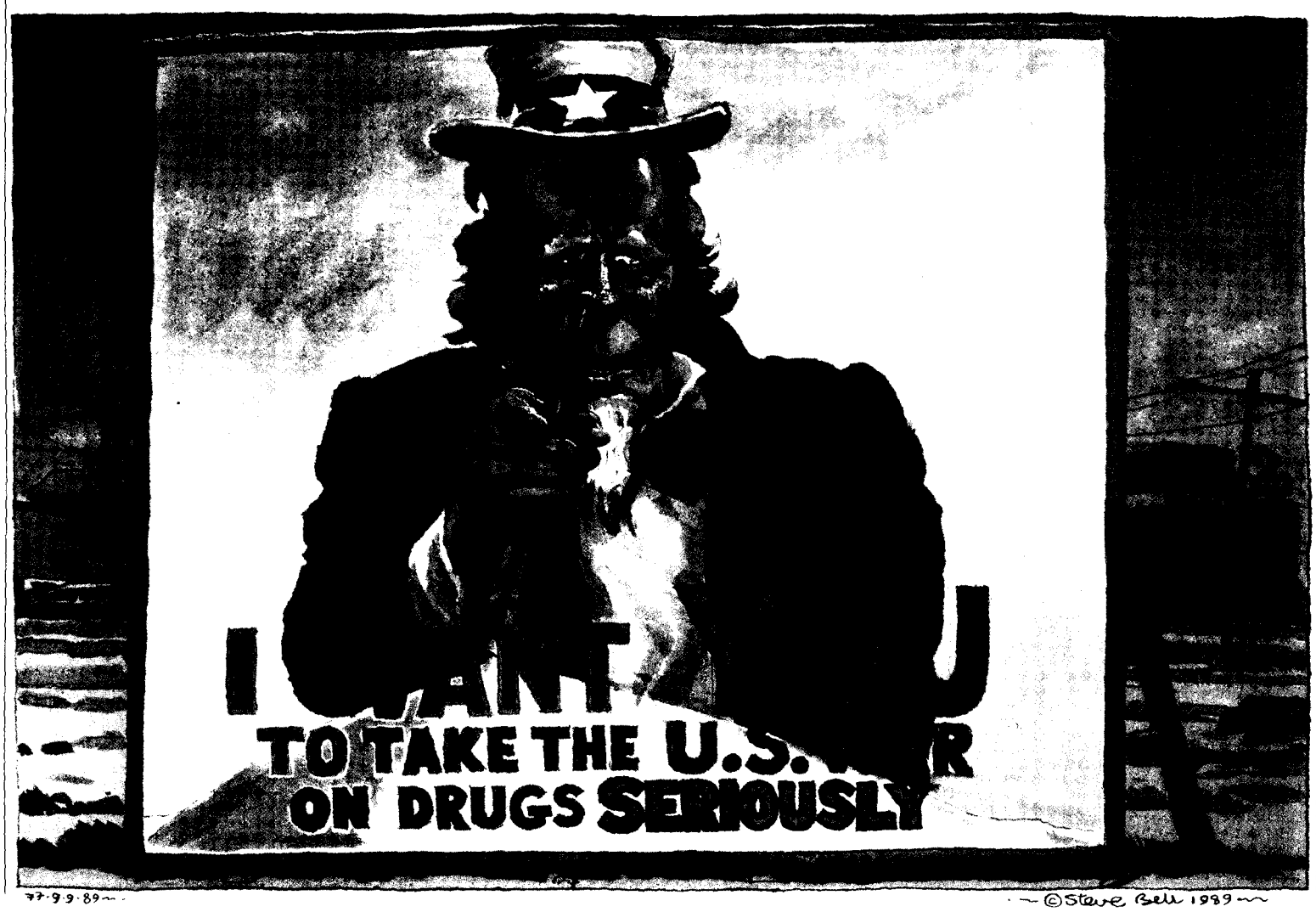
● Leeds City Council has ordered staff to record their working hours according to the decimal clock. Under this system the hour is divided into ten units of six minutes each. Thus six minutes past ten, in Leeds City Hall, is now 10.1. A quarter past is 10.25.—*Mail on Sunday (Ron Rubin)*

● Stephen Miller, 19, and Jason Farrer, 18, were put in the same cell at Wolverhampton magistrates court—and discovered they were half-brothers. They had the same father. "It was sheer luck they both happened to be put in the same cell," said a senior police officer. —*Yorkshire Evening Post* (Alan Tobias)

● The big clean-up of York's rivers has begun. York City Council has taken the first steps towards scouring the Ouse and Foss of their accumulated scum of rubbish and regular patrols are promised.

The director of environmental services Mr Trevor Phillips said today: "I am not prepared to let this fall between two stools."— *York Evening Press* (James Richards)

● Hoey also reveals that the princess worked hard to preserve her marriage long after it had deteriorated. In December last year, for example, she organised a surprise dinner party for 70 guests at Gatcombe Park as a belated celebration of her husband's fortieth birthday, which had occurred on September 22.—*Sunday Times* (Michael Carlson)



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DIARY

Sean French

I was interested by the report in the *Guardian* on Monday which revealed that negotiations had taken place between the new newspaper, the *Sunday Correspondent*, and the slightly less new newspaper, the *Independent*, to discuss the possibility of producing a Sunday paper together.

No date was given, but these negotiations, arranged by, of all people, Richard Branson, must have been fairly recent. What the report didn't mention was that all this had happened before. During the conception of what was to become the *Correspondent*, the idea had been put to Andreas Whittam Smith, editor and chief executive of the *Independent*, as a possible *Sunday Independent*. At this stage, nearly two years ago, Whittam Smith was too embroiled in the creation of the Saturday colour supplement to consider launching a new Sunday at the same time, but he wished the project well—or so at least those who talked to him understood.

It seems to have been a feature of Britain's cultural scene that herbivores have started behaving like carnivores. Witness this week's SLD assembly which has been rather like a collection of koala bears trying to imitate pit bull terriers.

While the new Sunday paper was at a critical stage, the *Independent* announced vaguely that it would be starting a Sunday paper. This proved no help to the *Correspondent* in raising finance and it may have made it harder to attract the sort of editor it wanted. Hugo Young, the *Guardian* columnist, was approached without success, as was Anthony Howard, then deputy editor of the *Observer*.

Perhaps as revenge, the name *Correspondent* was chosen as a clear, almost mocking near-rhyme of their rival title.

There was a lot of talk among journalists about the *Independent*'s announcement being mere bluff. But the dummy edition they produced last month was genuinely outstanding, in form and content. As soon as I saw it, I knew that a *Sunday Independent* was inevitable.

The bizarre result is that, starting next January, two newspapers representing decent independent journalism, politics of the soft centre and all things green are going to be battling it out to the death.

Georgina Henry of the *Guardian* lamented this as if it was the end of an age of innocence. She was particularly shocked that the *Independent* had refused to carry advertising for the *Correspondent*.

At times like this I remember the words of the singer Robert Wyatt, a card-carrying CP member, who was talking to an interviewer about Richard Branson's management of Virgin. He argued that the idea that record companies could be run in two ways—a benign, hippy, alternative way or a cruel, capitalist, orthodox way—was a myth. Images varied, but there was only one kind of record company.

In the newspaper world the issue is complicated by the question of ownership. Nevertheless, whatever the political line, there is only one way a newspaper can be run day to day, which is as a combination of a business and a dictatorship. It was the failure to recognise this that sank the left-wing tabloid, the *News on Sunday*.

The left seems to have difficulty with this concept, which is bizarre, since party discipline is meant to be a left-wing invention. The current Sunday plans are for readers who are represented but, according to the ubiquitous polls, unsatisfied. But the market for unrepresented readers is still gaping.

It's going to be interesting to see what line the *Correspondent* takes on the current drug controversy (and wouldn't it be nice if it took a line without polling the tastes of its target readership first?). The current difference of opinion shows how far we have come since the sixties.

Currently the *Economist* and *Sunday Times* agree with that old liberal individualist, Milton Friedman, (and me) that a war against drugs cannot be won and they would be better legalised and taxed. (But see what Geoffrey Pearson has to say in this issue of *NSS*, page 10.)

Remarkably, last Sunday's *Observer* editorial stoutly defended the status quo, denying that "legalising drugs controls their effects in any worthwhile sense".

I strongly disagree, but that isn't the point. The disagreement shows to what extent the old political divisions have been rearranged. Our two-party system has broken up into fragments of Toryism, liberalism, paternalism, corporatism, consumerism, greenism, and even some socialism. No wonder so few people are happy with their political parties and their newspapers.

However, some politics and newspapers change in odder ways than others. David Edgar, who as well as being a playwright is one of the beadiest observers of the far right, has sent me a photocopy of a recent editorial by Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

On 3 September Worsthorne wrote quite an amusing defence of Neville Chamberlain, arguing that he ought to be a hero of the modern campaigners for peace. Unfortunately it wasn't entirely clear in the end whether Worsthorne was celebrating or mocking the great appeaser.

He concluded his editorial very oddly indeed by arguing that Churchill at Yalta and Potsdam let the Poles down worse in 1945 than Chamberlain had in 1939: "We shall never be sure that after Hitler's death even a victorious Germany would not have adopted its own version of *glasnost* and *perestroika* very much sooner—say 30 or even 40 years ago than did a victorious Russia after the death of Stalin. In which case, who is to say whether the last 50 years would have been better or worse?"

I resume writing after a brief pause to pick up my jaw which had fallen to the floor. Worsthorne should consult some solidly conservative war historians such as John Ericson and Michael Howard to assess how hard a bargain Churchill could have driven with Stalin.

For the rest, Worsthorne's view that life in Europe over the past 50 years might have been better if Germany had won the war might not find much agreement in, say, Jerusalem but it might stimulate a cheer and a song if he repeated it in the old soldiers' clubs of Paraguay.

ROGER WODDIS

Under the blanket

Lady Chatterley's Lover is being serialised next January on Radio 4's Book at Bedtime, but a BBC spokeswoman promised that "sensitive parts would be taken into consideration".

Times and old usages have changed
Since Lord Reith ran the BBC:
Lost is our sense of innocence,
And so to bed with Lady C.

But Auntie has a rigid rule
(If that's the proper adjective):
Four-letter words should not refer
To parts that may be sensitive.

As prosecuting counsel said,
When D H Lawrence made the news,
"Is this the kind of book you'd wish
Your wife or servant to peruse?"

The Corporation still is pledged
To purge the matter it transmits:
There would be whoops of joy in hell,
If Bromley heard the naughty bits.

Jock Gallagher, the radio head,
Stands guard on decency and taste,
And has imposed a blanket ban
On certain acts below the waist.

The goings-on at Wragby Hall
Are far too rude for Radio 4.
It is your Christian task to kill,
And wicked to make love, not war.

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Steve Pyke/Network

The street connection

Forget the drug barons. An effective policy to help users in Britain must start by controlling low-level street pushers, argues Geoffrey Pearson

President Bush's tough-talking $7.86 billion action plan to tackle the cocaine cartels in Colombia and the "war" against "the dealers in white death" in Britain have dominated the headlines in recent weeks. Stories about the power of the South American drug barons jostle with articles describing kitchen-chemistry "crack" factories on rundown housing estates, not to mention the new craze for Acid ("nothing to do with drugs, you understand") House parties.

But this is something more than moral panic. Since the heroin epidemic of the early 1980s, there remain serious pockets of drug misuse in many British towns and cities—predominantly in neighbourhoods already steeped in unemployment, deprivation and housing decay. And now there is a new twist to the media debate: a rush by some to embrace radical policies of legalisation. Even the *Sun* (8 September 1989) has joined in the act: "Should We Abolish Hard-Drug Laws? YES Says The Sun's Own Doctor." What is going on?

Initially, the opponents of the prohibitionist "War on Drugs" could be easily defined. They were either old-style "ageing hippie" liberals, whose main concern was the de-criminalisation of cannabis, or the New Right economic libertarians, with a naive faith in the benign nature of market forces. There had always been an argument, although not always a very convincing one, that the main problems associated with a drug such as heroin stemmed from its illegal status, rather than the drug itself.

An editorial in the *Economist* in April of last year, "Getting gangsters out of drugs", sounded a somewhat different note, urging both legalisation *and* discouragements to drug misuse through taxation policies.

The view had already been advanced in North America, by Milton Friedman among others, and it has gained steady ground in Europe, including some pronouncements from the European Parliament. In both the Netherlands and Spain, forms of de-criminalisation are in operation. In Switzerland, as *Le Monde* has recently reported, a federal commission report has stimulated new thinking on de-criminalising the offence of possession of drugs for personal use. And now, from France, the stuffy legal publishing house Dalloz has issued Francis Caballero's

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book *Droit de la Drogue* which is fervently against prohibition, urging a *commerce passif* that will bring all drugs within a national monopoly of production, importation and distribution.

Caballero's argument is that prohibitionist policies, as demonstrated by the disastrous US alcohol purge in the 1920s, are costly and counter-productive: they lead to organised crime and violence, the dangerous adulteration of drugs, the corruption of state officials and judges, and all for nothing.

The war against drugs is similarly an unwinnable contest, polluting the legal atmosphere, threatening the liberties of individuals, and contaminating the banking system. Tolerance of alcohol, tobacco and pharmaceutical tranquillisers is set as a bizarre contrast with the prohibition of opium, coca and cannabis. The "war" against drugs is redefined as a war across the north-south global divide, and even possibly racist: rich countries tolerating their own produce, while waging war on the cash-crops of poor countries. What could then be more logical and more humane, than to bring the whole gamut of drugs within a unitary system of legal controls and licensing arrangements?

And yet, of one thing we can be sure. This is not going to happen. What government is going to allow itself to be seen to be "soft" on drugs? Internationally, nations are bound together in systems of mutual incomprehension. Powerful vested interests such as the American Drug Enforcement Agency rule the roost, and politicians bolster their reputations by macho posturing and easy moral rhetoric.

Meanwhile, the global trade in illicit drugs has grown at an astonishing rate. Whatever their attractions, arguments about legalisation are a waste of brain-power and breath. They are no more than symptomatic of a growing recognition that current (and largely US-inspired) prohibition and enforcement measures directed against major traffickers have failed and been seen to fail. What, then, to do?

There are other reasons for questioning legalisation as a panacea, if this means making dangerous drugs such as heroin and cocaine freely available. Until the early 1980s, heroin was almost entirely unknown outside London. The expansion of new trade routes from the opium fields of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, made it cheap and plentiful. Often associated with the novel practice of smoking the drug on foil ("chasing the dragon" from the Hong Kong Cantonese expression, *Jui Lung*) the new heroin problem spread like wildfire—in Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere.

Nevertheless, it was not a "national" problem. The spread of the new heroin habit was highly scattered. For example, research on the Wirral peninsula, Merseyside, has shown that while there were no more than 100 opiate users in 1980, by 1987 there were 5,000 regular heroin users. The problem was felt with most intensity in areas of high unemployment—something which could have been predicted from the experience of the North American ghettoes in the 1950s and 1960s. The devastation brought upon already hard-pressed working-class communities—burglaries and other crimes to support drug users' habits, disruption to the lives of individuals and families, and all manner of other difficulties—rests uneasily against smooth economic arguments about "legalisation".

Then came HIV and Aids. Sharing "works" is a wonderfully efficient means of disseminating HIV, and one look at Scotland shows what a possible future might be. For reasons unknown, east-coast cities such as Edinburgh became a fertile breeding-ground for the virus and, by 1985, more than 50 per cent of intravenous drug users were HIV seropositive. Bald statistics spell out the scale of the calamity. The male:female ratio of people known to be HIV positive bangs home the message: 15:1 in the rest of the UK, but only 2.5:1 in Scotland. It can happen here.

To its credit, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has risen to the occasion. For the Commons Home Affairs Committee in 1985, drug misuse was "the most serious peacetime threat to our national well-being". In its first report on *Drug Misuse and Aids* in 1988, the advisory council trumpeted this exclamation: "HIV is a greater threat to public and individual health than drug misuse." The council has issued a wide range of intelligent policy recommendations. Methadone maintenance prescribing is back on the agenda. Harm-reduction policies of all kinds are embraced. Drug-using parents should not be deterred from seeking help for fear that their children will be taken into public care. Prisons should grasp the nettle of safe sex and drug programmes, while for all but the most serious drug offenders imprisonment should be avoided through the expansion of community-based programmes.

The enforcement measures against major traffickers have failed and been seen to fail

Meanwhile, the government sits on its hands. Most of the innovation in the field of HIV-related work on drug misuse has consisted of bottom-up initiatives, including both syringe exchange schemes and radical departures in health education such as the *Smack in the Eye* comic from Manchester.

There has always been a suspicion that political calculation has directed government policy: better (and cheaper) to throw a few million at high-profile media campaigns, and show that the government cares, than to expand health and social services. Better (and easier) to talk tough than to grapple with the serious and complex social difficulties which underpin Britain's drug problems. In any case, the heroin problem is embedded deep in Labour's heartlands, and "crack" will be the same. There is no electoral advantage in a vigorous and properly directed drugs policy.

Even so, many of the Advisory Council's recommendations are completely in line with the Home Office green paper on punishment, custody and the community. This offers a real window of opportunity for the development of community-based alternatives to custody for drug offenders. The National Association of Probation Officers, which has opposed the Home Office proposals, needs to shake itself. This is a major challenge, requiring the expansion of multi-agency diversion programmes, based on models such as the pilot "arrest-referral" scheme for drug users in Southwark, and more general diversion and intermediate treatment (projects of this kind which have been used successfully to halve the custodial population for juvenile offenders during the 1980s).

This demands a shift of attention in law enforcement, away from the single-minded preoccupation with major traffickers towards low-level enforcement strategies directed against relatively minor drug distribution networks and user-dealers. Measures against the "little people" will be a difficult pill to swallow for many people who work in drug services, but it is through them, rather than major traffickers, that dangerous drugs are made available in any given neighbourhood. Crucially, low-level dealers are often easily detected: it is one of the ironies of drug enforcement in Britain that while black communities were protesting in the mid-1980s about policing directed against young cannabis dealers, northern white working-class communities were up in arms about the police's lack of interest in local heroin dealers.

We cannot expect that the irrationality of throwing scarce resources at relatively benign drugs, such as cannabis, will be ended by legislative de-criminalisation (of 26,000 convictions and cautions for drug offences in 1987, nearly 22,000 were for cannabis). But there is discretion within the law, and it should be exercised in the interests of cost-effectiveness and community health.

Britain's drugs problem has not got any easier since the heroin epidemic began to peak out in the late 1980s. In some areas (Edinburgh, for example) former heroin users have switched to injecting tranquilliser drugs such as temazepam and temgesic. Amphetamines ("speed" or "whizz") and LSD are also widely available. Cocaine use is growing, although probably not as quickly as many people fear, while crack remains a problem for the future. The amount of cocaine seized in 1988 was greater than heroin, both in Britain and Europe as a whole.

The barons, the mafias and the cartels are not the most important focus for an effective British drugs policy, which will have to prove its effectiveness on the street. The scale of the global economy in illicit drugs is, in any event, such that it outstrips the capabilities of either drug enforcement or military interventions to eliminate it entirely. Any number of third-world nations have economies so massively distorted by this trade that it is a World Bank problem to re-structure and re-build these economies, if there is the political will. But it is a big If.

In the meantime, we need to build effective low-level defences both for those who get into problems with their drug use, and also the wider community. Legalisation debates are highly significant as a symptom of policy failure, but could become a diversion. This problem is not going to go away. ●

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Claire Jarrett

Coral and turquoise

"A romance of the last 500,000 years", says Alice Walker of her latest novel. Here she reminisces on the writing of The Temple of My Familiar

One day in 1983 I was invited to the home of a casual acquaintance in Mendocino who knew of my interest in Indian art. Spread across her yard, for sale, were many items from Guatemala: jewellery, fabrics, clothing, beaded gourds, musical instruments. They were being sold by a Guatemalan man and his North American wife who said that the money they earned would be carried back to the Indians (chased from their homes and villages by the non-Indian, Spanish army) from whom they received the goods.

There were many old and rare pieces of clothing which looked as if they'd just come off someone's back. I bought one of these, a lovely, well-used shawl of many colours, and an old piece of red and blue handwoven cotton, very faded and with a number of holes. This cloth, the North American woman assured me, was practically extinct in Guatemala and was not being made any more. I liked its colours, its softness. What had it been in its Guatemalan life, I wondered? A tablecloth? A bedspread? For it was large, I saw, as I unfolded it beneath the trees prior to purchase. There were curious seams running through it and, along one side, a hem. It had a quality I particularly like—in people as well as in fabric—suppleness and strength.

It was months later, when I had earned enough money to attach an indoor toilet to my studio, that I noticed there were words (actually one word, printed over and over) written on the cloth. I was sitting in the shade on the front deck making a pair of curtains for the new bathroom (for I had decided to splurge and have a bathtub as well). I held the cloth up to the sun and tried to read it, only to find that the word was in Spanish.

Well, my daughter Rebecca studies Spanish in school and was practically fluent; I called her immediately and spelled the word for her. It was "Remember". Well, yes, I thought, but what am I to remember?

I completed the curtains, hung them at the windows, stroked them often as I passed by, and now the word *Recuerda* (which Rebecca and I loosely translated as "You all remember!") stood out with all the clarity and impact of a stop sign. I was to remember; I knew that much; and part of what I had to remember, I soon realised, was the condition and fate of the people, women, surely, who had made the cloth.

For years my partner, Robert, and I had planned to study Spanish. Rebecca supported and encouraged us. In the fall of 1986, just at the start of the rainy season, we began classes, tutored by Rebecca's own high-school Spanish

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teacher, Joanna. Each Tuesday morning promptly at ten o'clock she arrived, and we sat around my dining room table as Robert and I made a valiant attempt to learn Spanish. This continued for five months. I was remarkably slow to learn. Robert, who once spent a summer constructing housing on the outskirts of Havana, was much quicker. I found Spanish as difficult to learn and to speak as it was beautiful to hear—and not at all "easy" as my sister students at Spelman College used to say as as I moaned over the French I had then chosen to study, and have by now forgotten.

However, the Spanish-speaking characters in *The Temple of My Familiar* didn't wait for me to attain proficiency in their tongue. Lucky for me. Almost immediately, after only the second or third lesson—at a time when I barely grasped Joanna's cheery greeting each Tuesday morning of *¡Hola!, ¿Como está?*–they began speaking as if I understood every word. Which I did, because though I realised they were speaking in Spanish, I was now able to hear it in English! Usually, now, by the time Joanna arrived at ten, I would have been writing the story involving my Spanish-speaking characters since about seven. I would leap out of bed minutes before her knock, hasten into my clothes and down the stairs and dutifully perform, with Robert, the day's "dialogo". I felt at times exasperated that when I opened my mouth the silvery Spanish sounds coiled just beneath my tongue, and that I had been immersed in for three hours, failed to roll out. Joanna, witnessing my look of surprised perplexity, would often laugh.

At the same time that I was learning Spanish—in order to be able to more accurately "remember" the women of the cloth—I began to dream, to think about, and to desire to see about me the colours turquoise and coral. I developed such a fixation on these colours (which I called my "spiritual colours") and talked about needing them so much—though it was unclear to me in just what way I needed them—that on my fortieth birthday, as we sat down to a surprise dinner for me in our rented house in Ubud, Bali, Rebecca and Robert presented me with a very old, lovely, East Indian necklace made of turquoise and coral. It was beautiful. I loved it. I put it on. But I needed something more.

Back in the States I bought coral-coloured bedsheets, a lampshade of coral and turquoise. A dress of coral. Boots of turquoise. But none of these things helped. I still yearned for these two colours, but not, necessarily, I soon realised, to decorate my house with or to wear.

I felt apprehensive, too. Sometimes, when I thought about the persistence of these colours in my psyche, my need for them seemed irrational, and made me think of the local women, when I was growing up, who developed, usually while they were pregnant, a passion for starch or white clay, which they sucked on by the hour.

One day I overcame my apprehension enough to buy several gallons of turquoise and coral paint. The woman working on the bathroom painted the bathtub turquoise but balked at painting the walls coral. Too hot, she said. And I was cowed again. However, months later, I went out to the shed and pulled out the paint I had bought. The turquoise was too dark, I found, and the coral too orange. I sat down and began to mix these colours with others—the orange coral I mixed with brown, and the dark turquoise I mixed with white, until I reached the colours I'd held so long in my mind. I then began to paint my bed turquoise and the ceiling above my bed, coral. I began to paint my front door.

I felt immediately that this was the right thing to do, and painted the bed and the ceiling in a matter of hours, giving myself such a painful case of tendonitis in shoulder and wrist that the door was left half done—for nearly a year. Painting my bed and ceiling in turquoise and coral, however, unlocked the central dream of *The Temple of My Familiar*, the dream about our collusion with the forces that suppress and colonise our spirituality, and came complete with temple, familiar, Lissie and Suwelo, and the understanding that I was writing a "romance" (that is to say, a fantasy, wisdom tale, memory, adventure) that was less about the relationships of human beings to each other than about the relationship of humans (women, in particular) to animals.

This insight was confirmed by the fact that animals—whether I was in the country or the city—were suddenly everywhere in my life. A "watch cat" appeared on my stoop in the city, and remained there until the novel was done; various other creatures: birds, deer, snakes, etc, were constant visitors in the country. The presence of these numerous animals seemed so odd to me, but in an entirely lovely way, that I wrote an essay about the experience called "The Universe Responds". It seemed to me that the animals that I now saw wherever I looked—much like the Spanish-speaking characters who showed up talking at the moment I started to learn Spanish—had decided to wait until it was clear whether I had eyes to see, and then had decided to let themselves be seen.

There is a third "leg" on which the plot of this novel rests. It was something that occurred a few months after I'd finished *The Color Purple* and was missing the characters in that book dreadfully. Were there to be no more such fascinating folks in my life? I inwardly mumbled. As I thought about this one day on my way to put a bundle of trash into the outdoor garbage can, I suddenly flashed on an old man in a nursing home and a younger, middle-aged man sitting beside his bed. There was an intensity between them that stopped me in my tracks, and a vividness to the image that made it memorable. I found I was able to recall it, and puzzle over it, clearly and constantly over the next several years. It was not until I reached the last chapter of *The Temple of My Familiar*, however, that I understood that the old man was Hal and the younger man Suwelo, and that Hal had been instructing Suwelo about how to live—with women, with children, with other men, with animals, with white people. *Con todos!*

Throughout the writing of *Temple* I relied on the guidance provided by the synchronicity I experienced between my dreams, insights and intuitions, and events that corroborated or resonated with them in the world. For example, six months or so after I'd written the chapters about the Latin American refugees, Zedé and Carlotta, I met three refugees—a mother and her two young daughters—from El Salvador. I met them at a political demonstration, and for nearly two months they lived in my house with me. We are friends, today, and I love them all for who they are; but on first meeting, I have to admit they were the mother and daughter, Zedé and Carlotta, I had created in the opening chapters of my novel, and I responded to them with the instant recognition of someone who already understood something of their lives. It was as if, having written about a refugee family—Zedé and Carlotta—I could now *see* Marcia and her daughters, Maria and Daniela (not their real names), and they were not, even from the first moment, strangers to me.

I cannot recount or even remember all the times I said to Rebecca or Robert, "Wait 'til you read my novel!," as some confirmation or other from the Universe appeared. Near the end of writing it, I felt as if I were walking in a circle of magic, and this made me indescribably happy. But nothing could have prepared me for the "magic" that occurred on the very last day of writing. I had just completed the paragraph in which Suwelo contemplates the painting of Lissie as Lion, and was hurrying up the hill to my studio to type it up on my Mac Plus, when I noticed what appeared to be a tan plastic drycleaners' bag—without my glasses this was a blur—lying some distance out in the field. A neatnik to my soul—I will pick up trash anywhere—I moved quickly to remove this unsightly blight, wondering all the while how it came to be there. But then, when I was a few steps away, I saw that it wasn't a discarded drycleaners' bag, but a large, tawny cat, a miniature "lion", lying at ease, calmly looking back at me. I'd never seen it before; I haven't seen it since. I began to smile, and fairly skipped along to my studio.

I felt that this "omen" was Lissie's sign of approval for the ending I'd just written, and also a sign from the animals that in *The Temple of My Familiar* I had kept to our collective vision of reality. And that we were united in our sense of peace at the outcome.

And, finally, after the novel was finished in manuscript, I discovered I was ready to complete the painting of my front door, which I had started nearly a year earlier when I painted my ceiling and bed. Rolling up my sleeves one morning, paintbrush in hand—and only just then realising I'd written a book in which many of the characters are painters! I began.

My door is coral and turquoise, trimmed in dark lavender blue. There is a sun on it and a moon, and the lower turquoise panels look like ocean and the upper ones look like sky. There are two birds flying at the very top. There are snakes left and right.

This is the door to my dwelling. It says: This is the person who lives in this house now.

I look at it, and it is very satisfying to me, though my snakes are awkwardly drawn and my birds are smudged.

Maybe I am mistaken, I think, looking at it, in believing that it was painting with my "spiritual colours", turquoise and coral, that allowed me to write my novel. Perhaps it was writing my novel that permitted me, at last, to paint and therefore to recognise my own door.©●

The Temple of My Familiar is published 21 September by The Women's Press. Suwelo, Lissie and Hal are characters from the novel

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At arm's length

Ed Pearce finds that TUC calls at Blackpool for the restoration of union rights are no match for Labour's determination to keep its distance

There was a glorious moment on Wednesday when Arthur Scargill made his entrance. At previous TUC conferences, the little man whose vanity had destroyed the NUM and brought first war, then accelerated closedown to the pit villages, would once have arrived to a scurry of photographers and a buzz of delegates.

Those Roman days are over. This wasn't Caesar at the Coliseum, it was a man finding his way to the one-and-nines (or whatever the present day price is) in order to watch a family film. And indeed, the 1989 Blackpool conference was secure in its 'U' certificate. No parental guidance needed for this one.

The Scargill arrival was, however, a characteristically late entrance, mid-afternoon on the Wednesday and obviously chosen in hope of impact. A Scottish friend of mine from the sardonic right observed: "There had been hopes that he had just died quietly. But from the tan he's got, clearly he's spent the time under his sun lamp."

But for all the difference he makes, Scargill's continued existence is a mere administrative technicality. The blood and rant can still be conjured but they come in a vacuum. Neither he nor the Magog or his Gog, the now suspended Eric Hammond, any longer gives the conference its feel of two encampments at a battle site, of thumbs trained on eyeballs.

Rhetoric these days is intermittent and only Rodney Bickerstaffe is any good at it. Bickerstaffe, a compulsive emotion-stripper but a thoroughly likeable man, did his NUPE piece about funds denied to the hospitals. It was warming and decent between the suppressed tears, if unlikely to have any impact.

One actually needs that sort of soft-hearted eloquence; for many of the leading delegates insist upon reading out in a leaden fashion, and with give-away errors of stressing, speeches written by research assistants of modest attainments. Verlaine advised us to take rhetoric and ring its neck; the TUC's General Council responds rather literally. But the purpose is fulfilled; we have calm and restraint.

There are intelligent and rational people on the General Council. There is less *amour propre* than in the days of Basnett, Scanlon and Jones. John Edmonds and Bill Jordan represent genuine modernity and a willingness to come to terms with the present indicative tense. Norman Willis survives the scorn as an intentionally funny and seriously decent man. He may not be a great strategist but what did the TUC want, Clausewitz? Broadly, this General Council and this conference are on the same wavelength as the post-convalescent Labour Party.

However, earnest best efforts were made on all sides to conjure a major rift with Labour on the prospective restoration of legal immunities. One says "On all sides" because although, of course, the Tory press stood attentively by with camera-ready copy about splits, conflicts and quarrels, the council chairman, Tony Christopher, and T & G number two, Bill Morris, can hardly complain. They made hardball speeches of the "No tinkering, we want our rights sort" and must expect evilly-disposed leader writers and headline writers to take up their cues.

In fact, none of this actually passed off too badly. Everyone knew that prominent TUC figures would speak like negotiators making a big pitch at a time when the Labour Party, which

Meacher is likely to stay on the shadow cabinet, but he could find his portfolio being taken away

is trying to buy something else in a different store, must talk a different language (and subsequently stand by its moderation). The unions may have won back *some* public esteem, witness the public acceptance of Jimmy Knapp's case in the railway dispute.

But it is the weaker unions of today which are so esteemed. Kenneth Baker almost certainly reckons that the gaping graves of 1979 are worth one last wide-screen lamentation. All sense is for Labour keeping a sweet and polite distance from the unions. Labour is wise to remain highly agnostic about letting general secretaries enjoy feudal rights with too many peasants' wives.

But as for a split, it is understood that the TUC was going to say one thing and Neil Kinnock another; also that call for "more than just tinkering" (Bill Morris) is a first shot in a campaign to obtain what tinkering one can.

While everyone can stay terrribly cool and sophisticated about shock horror stuff in the press concerning divisions and conflicts, the exchanges involving Michael Meacher and Peter Mandelson are something else. Meacher was impolitic to support the unions all-or-nothing claims. Tony Christopher and Bill Morris are free agents able to argue with the Labour leadership.. When Labour's spokesman on employment (not "shadow spokesman" as he was anounced at a fringe meeting in CJ's Café Blackpool) endorses those union demands, he is making policy for his leader and setting out a policy which that leader is not going to like. And latterly what Mr Kinnock does not like he inclines to jumping up and down upon.

Now like the TUC and the Labour Party, Meacher is influenced by the audience he is addressing. For reasons which evade me, he wants to make his way back on to the NEC of the party (endless sessions of being rolled over, bored rigid or both). But he does, and that requires union bloc votes, which means saying, where can it be heard, what the unions want to hear: "Give the lads their immunities back. We demand sympathetic strikes now", and so on.

Personally I like Michael Meacher. Wrong-headed and Bennish as he is, there is a certain warmth and good feeling there, and any amount of decent good intentions. He spoke better and more comfortably to a crowd of the Unemployed Combine in CJ's café than he ever does in the Commons where he has mastered the unlikely tempo marking of *lento agitato*.

There was, however, an elegant and endearing episode in which he declared his approval of what the chairman had said. "And I completely agree with Terry." "Kevin actually" murmured the chairman. I couldn't resist mentioning this to him a day or so later. "Yes", he said, "I will say Terry Egan when actually it's Kevin Egan;" Kevin Coyne actually."Oh, Christ, then there must be a Terry Egan after all."

I don't think one could ever be against Michael after that. But it would be a bad mistake to suppose that such good humour extends to the leadership. The displeasure of Peter Mandelson with all deviations from the party's calculatedly opaque and miasmal line was duly communicated. The buzz among the brothers at that was real and represented genuine aggravation. For the press director is not given to speaking without clearance.

A spat involving Meacher and Mandelson was more like a shadow cabinet split and far more capable of laying down real trouble than the routine trench shelling of the official union and party exchanges. But it could get worse. There is a distinct murmur that though Michael Meacher may well make it back to the NEC and is likely also to stay on the shadow cabinet, he could find his portfolio being taken away.

Now the last object of Neil Kinnock's executive lightenings, John Prescott, might advise optimism. Since going to transport he has enjoyed a brilliant run of successes in a Siberia pleasingly lit by a Tuscan sun. The unions will not see it like that. They will be immoderately miffed and will take any shift of Michael Meacher to Northern Ireland, agriculture or the arts as a shell actually *hitting* the union trench. The disposal of union votes for the NEC could be interesting. A sudden boost for Michael from well-disposed brothers in that poll would pose a question to the leadership which it would greatly prefer not to see put.

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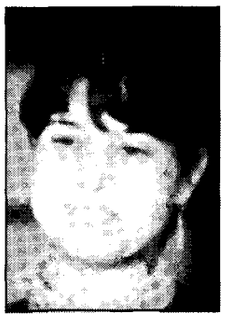
STAND

Fathers day

Pat Spallone on reproductive rights



Men will be given further paternal rights and powers if the government's proposed legislation on "assisted reproduction" becomes law. The Embryo Bill—which will be introduced in parliament in November—says that an estranged husband or unmarried male partner of a woman who has undergone IVF (in vitro fertilisation) will be given a veto over what happens to the embryos.

This runs counter to the only parallel that can be made in pre-IVF history: men have had no legal rights to stop an abortion. The forthcoming legislation on reproduction will, of course, reverberate in women's lives, self-perceptions and hard-won social gains.

Like the abortion law, the legislation proposed in the white paper on human fertilisation and embryology, takes the embryo/foetus as a separate entity altogether, split off from a woman, and sets it up as a universal individual, albeit with an ephemeral human identity. Well why not, you might say, since in this case medical science has realised a literal split? We are talking about embryos maintained in laboratory vessels, outside a woman's body. So shouldn't the man, the sperm donor, have equal rights to decide how those embryos are used?

Although some might argue that the woman as "egg donor" or "egg recipient" will enjoy the same rights as the man, and so all is equality, and "isn't that what women want?", the point is that this is nothing like equality. In fact, it continues the subordination of women.

There are no autonomous women in this legislation. For the science journal *Nature*, removing eggs is like removing sperm, and so not a moral problem. Its insulting logic ignored everything a woman goes through—administration of powerful fertility drugs and hormones, invasive surgery, and the attendant risks—and equated it with masturbating.

Women may be perceived as gamete donors "just like men" in the parlance of science and in legal arguments about ownership of one's body parts, but this is only logical in a liberal political thought that can't seem to think in any other terms but contractual arrangements between individuals over property (here, eggs, sperm, and embryo). This is not the totality of women's experience. Whatever happened to pregnancy, labour and the birth process? Much of that is in the hands of medical scientists, in the discipline of embryology (the study of pregnancy). Consider that the two legislative "options" for embryo research (to prohibit it or permit limited experimentation) are both *de facto* foetal protection laws.

This proposed legislation is not surprising in the light of the policy debate on reproductive technologies. Feminists understood from the beginning that that policy is reasserting the primacy of the heterosexual nuclear family, and the rights and privileges of men within it. The philosophical and intellectual foundations on which this legislation rests is found in the report of the government's Committee of Inquiry on Human Fertilisation and Embryology in 1984 (the Warnock report). It's worth reminding ourselves where its loyalties lay.

The Embryo Bill is about eggs and sperm as property. Whatever happened to pregnancy, labour and birth?

In expounding on the meaning and control of reproduction in particular instances, the report gave moral weight to patriarchal ideologies, and assumed a patriarchal image of motherhood. It restricted eligibility to receive IVF or insemination to heterosexual couples in the "best interests of the child". Most IVF programmes follow this rule, and always have.

The Warnock inquiry, initially prompted by the unique ethical implications of contemporary reproductive novelties, in vitro fertilisation and commercial surrogacy, took the opportunity to lay down a morality of female fertility and pregnancy. In doing so, it expanded its reaches to include a reproductive practice that has been around for centuries, artificial insemination by donor (AID), not because it is essentially medical or technological (it's not), but because it is "not universally accepted ethically [what is?], nor indeed regulated by law".

Lesbians and single women can, and do, use artificial insemination to have children without sexual relations with a man. By including AID in the realm of reproductive technology, the state can control how it is practised.

Moves to regulate donor insemination are thus caught up in a preoccupation with paternity and identifying a father with rights (and also a preoccupation with genes, a related issue). The Family Law Reform Act 1987 began the process by making the male partner of a woman who receives insemination the legal father. The status of a resulting child is changed from illegitimate to legitimate. Under an old English common law, the child of a woman without a husband was *filius nullius*, "no one's child".

Paternity anxiety of another kind looms in IVF practice. What if the father dies before the embryos are *in utero* (as they say)? Whence, all sorts of proclamations about existing embryos in regard to inheritance from the father and primogeniture have been outlined.

The inverse, maternity anxiety (who is the mother?) underlies to a great extent the banning of surrogacy. Commercial surrogacy is now a criminal offence, and new legislation tentatively argues against a "medical use" of surrogacy "in the best interests of the child". Read: surrogacy weakens the patriarchial ideology that claims all women are, by nature, mothers, driven by biological forces to reproduce and look after their offspring.

If you look to the Warnock report, the overwhelming suggestion is that "the best interests of the child" are judged with respect to motherhood's (patriarchal) image. Arguments cited against surrogacy paint a disreputable picture of the women, calling them a "third party" in a marriage (you might as well call IVF doctors a third party, and of course they are often called "test-tube fathers"), in a practice "inconsistent with human dignity" and a distortion of the mother-child relationship.

It is interesting to compare this aversion to surrogacy with the government's acceptance of egg donation, where one woman agrees to donate eggs removed from her body to another couple. Here the "egg donor" woman stays anonymous and remote, whereas in the case of surrogacy a pregnant woman is more difficult to cover up, especially since she might change her mind and wish to keep the child whose father is somebody else's husband.

If the government or the scientific establishment admitted that it is women—whole human beings—who are the primary subject of human embryology and the medical interventions that emerge from it, that would simply wreck everything.

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United they fall

Chris Harvie argues that recent events in East and West Germany may move us beyond Thatcher's vision of a Europe of sovereign nation states.
And, overleaf, Tom Porteus reports from East Germany on what life is like for those who have remained behind

There's a joke going the rounds in the Glasgow area. "Nuclear war has broken out. You have four minutes. How are you going to spend them?" Answer: "Buy a Lada and watch it rust." The Lada joke is an art form of peripheral Britain, where affordable mobility has this hit-or-miss, east European air.

In the last few hours I have been watching lots of Ladas, and Trabants, and Skodas. They have been trundling, and doubtless rusting, across the Hungarian frontier, bearing young East Germans, bearded or with Zapata moustaches, in jeans, with baby buggies, to a "new life" in the Federal Republic. The intriguing thing is that while the young are taking action, the old, or at least some of them, are trying to make sense of it.

Which brings me to Erhard Eppler and Enoch Powell. There isn't much in common between this pair, except Christianity and a reputation as public intellectuals. Eppler, overseas development minister in Willy Brandt's cabinet, senior figure on the left of the SPD, was chosen to deliver the official speech to the Bundestag on the "day of German unity" in June.

The result was a deeply moving, painfully honest discourse on German history and the options for a German future, which concluded: "The more sovereign that politics becomes in Germany, the less need will there be for a sovereign state to demonstrate and establish the unity of Germany."

Powell has, more recently, been sounding off in the opposite sense: about the emergence of a Europe of sovereign nation states, with Mrs Thatcher as its prophet. "Relations between those nations, not only those inside but also those outside the Rome treaty, ought to be based upon the principle of cooperation between independent sovereign states and therefore not upon the acceptance of a common government or legislative authority."

Grabbing around for something—anything—on which to fight the next election, Thatcher may find the Powellite formulation handy. Whether the Lada people do is another matter.

I don't imagine that the Lada people of East Germany are great political thinkers, but they belong to the honourable company of the pissed-

LEFT CEN

The Sunday Times has strong views of its own – but it also publishes every other opinion that matters.
From Brian Walden on the radical right to Martin Jacques on the radical left,
with plenty in-between, like Robert Harris, Susan Crosland and Michael Jones;
and columnists Simon Jenkins and Norman Macrae, who, depending on the issue,
could come down anywhere on the political spectrum.
In fact, you'll find more diversity of opinion in The Sunday Times than all other Sundays put together.

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off, who realise when their supposed leaders have gone round the twist, and want to make their excuses and leave the room. So that when Powell orates about the British electorate (Margaret Thatcher, prop.) being revolted by the drift of authority towards Europe, and the spinelessness of the Labour Party in encouraging this, I can think of a lot of people in Glasgow housing schemes saying, What the hell! If she hates it, it must be a good idea.

If they think this, then they're probably right. The gyrations of the British sovereign state over the last few years, analysed as old-style national diplomacy, suggest that it shouldn't be allowed out on its own. Thatcher's Falklands heroics have isolated her from South America, her opposition to sanctions has had a similar effect on black Africa; she has set out to offend the French and succeeded brilliantly in offending the Germans; she is barely talking to, let alone doing business with, Mr Gorbachev. Perhaps it is only gradually dawning on the great British public, but Thatcherian diplomacy represents, so far, a catastrophe of almost Suez proportions.

I go back to my Lada people because they will give as big a raspberry to Thatcher (and Powell) in Britain as their East German contemporaries are giving to Erich Honecker. The latter are clearing out less, I believe , for the "better life" of the west than because they believe that if enough of them do so, then the whole wretched system will fall apart.

The East Germans aren't desperately poor—their living standards are better than those of the Portuguese, Greeks or Irish in the EC—but they're sick of living under a system run by ageing fantasists. Likewise Powell's vision of a common "British" opinion discounts the corrosive effect that Thatcher's policies have had on a multinational society whose interrelationships, always delicate, she has now made impossible. Only the reaction takes a different form.

Given Britain's diplomatic marginalisation, Powell's reassembling of the 19th century nation state seems quaint, although one can see Thatcher's need for some such sustenance in the party battle. The problem is that in what must be seen as a European, and not just a German, crisis, the rhetoric of the sovereign state conjures up the most unpleasant of ghosts.

Thatcher's vision of national might is what appeals to her fervent supporters, the German far right

In his address to the Bundestag, Eppler began by differentiating nationality from the sovereign state, and stressing the former's subversion of the latter, from the Baltic to Scotland. The message that German nationality within a united Europe should menance no one, as it will be subject to the same pressures for regional government, has been repeated by the Saarland premier, Oskar Lafontaine, and the governing Mayor of Berlin, Walter Momper. That Momper had to struggle to make himself heard against the baying of right-wing *emigrés* from the "old" Germany shows, however, the other, ominous approach to the crisis.

In the sovereign state game Britain is weak (apart from its atom bombs, which Powell, never anyone's foot-soldier, wants rid of) and Germany is strong. The financial and industrial support of West Germany is essential for *perestroika* to work, and right-wing voices can be heard demanding—as, at least, a quid-pro-quo—the revision of frontiers, and other echoes of inter-war Realpolitik. If not a German-Soviet pact, then a new Rapallo agreement could be imaginable, which would divide east Europe into German and Russian spheres of influence.

This vision of national might is what appeals to Mrs Thatcher's most enthusiastic and embarrassing admirers, the German far right; and the prospect of it is the bogey which Erich Honecker can use to scare the rest of the Warsaw Pact.

If my hunch is right, and the Lada people are—as East Germany's "inconvenient man" Stefan Heym has argued—a silent protest movement which will bring his state down, then the post-Honecker regime has no alternative but to reform. Having a united Europe next door, with which East Germany already has a special relationship, will help. Having a German sovereign state as neighbour, with all that this implies will not. ●

THE RIGHT

A BROADER SPECTRUM OF OPINION.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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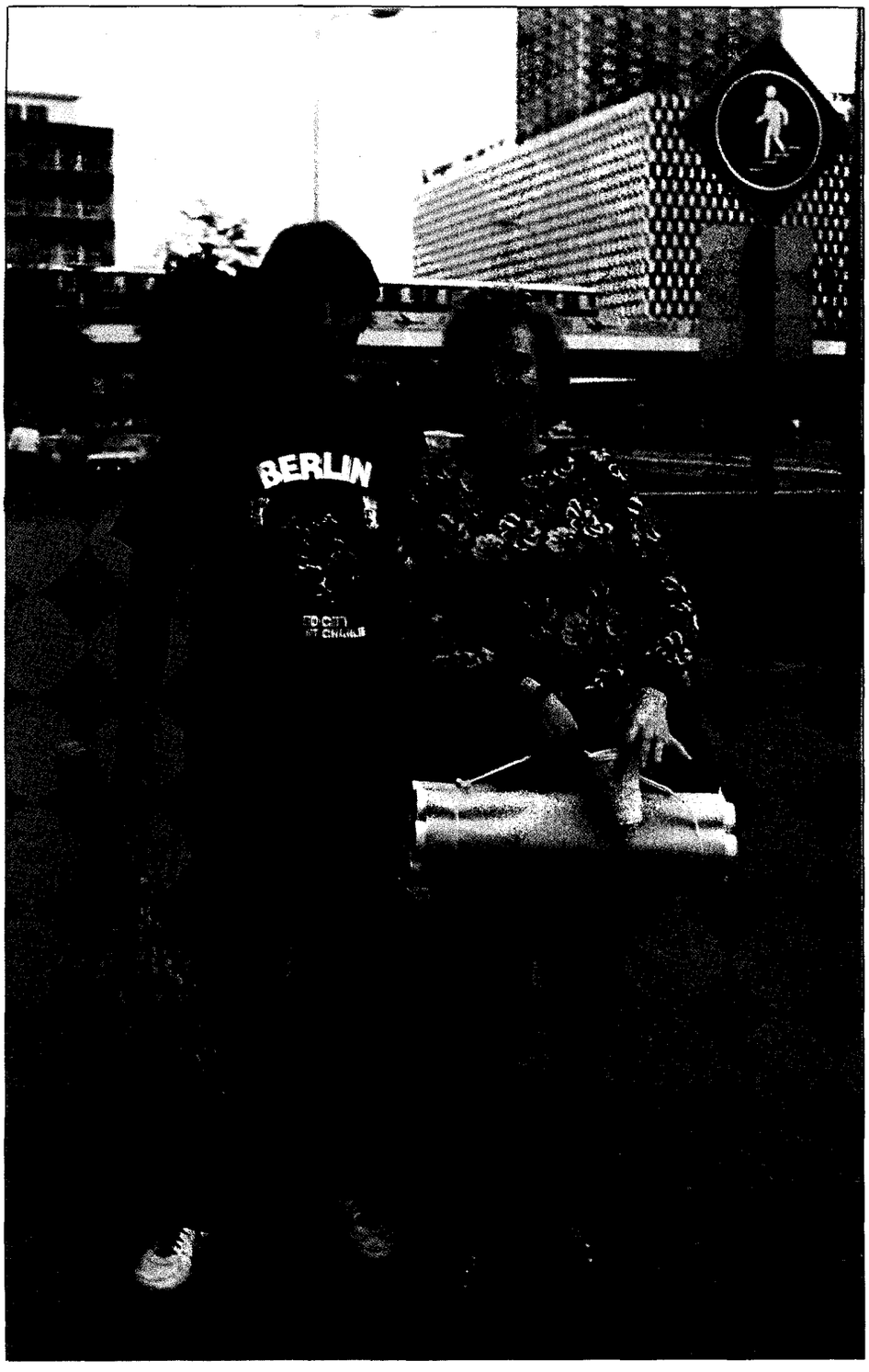
Divided they stand



Shep Shetzel/Select

Berlin

One of West Berlin's most popular tourist attractions is an empty bomb-site where grass grows up between the cobble stones and rusting tram lines run absurdly into a concrete wall. Potsdamer Platz is an enduring reminder of the defeat of Nazi Germany and the cold war division of Berlin, Germany and Europe. But these days many of the tourists clicking their cameras at the East German border guards in the watch towers on the other side of the Berlin Wall are east Europeans, come to West Berlin to do a little shopping, or even some business.

West Berlin's senate has intriguing plans for the site which was once known as the busiest crossroads in Europe. A World Trade Centre has been proposed for Potsdamer Platz, with the specific aim of "promoting economic ties" between the two Europes. West Berlin's senator for building, Wolfgang Nagel, says this and other such projects may help to "enforce" change in eastern bloc countries still resistant to economic and political reform, such as the German Democratic Republic.

The economic and technological onslaught of the west, combined with the bursting will for political change in eastern Europe, is a formidable challenge for East Germany's ageing leaders. They now feel that their struggle is not just to hold on to power for themselves, but for the survival of the East German state itself. The SED (Communist) Party's chief ideologue, Otto Reinhold, poses the GDR's dilemma when he asks, "what grounds for its legitimacy could a capitalist East Germany have next to a capitalist West Germany? Of course, none." Because of the postwar division of Germany, the GDR alone among eastern bloc states has no very obvious raison d'être except as part of the socialist east European order which the reform process threatens to dismantle.

The fears of the old men in East Berlin are further aggravated by an old quarrel: Bonn's refusal to recognise East Germany as a sovereign state. On the 50th anniversary of Hitler's invasion of Poland, the "revanchist" West German right were busy questioning the postwar border between Poland and East Germany as if a Greater Germany, not the GDR, were Poland's western neighbour.

This is taken hard by the SED Secretary General, Erich Honecker, and his circle, who earned their preeminence in the GDR as working-class heroes of the German Commun-

East Berliners are not fleeing economic hardship

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Every night, western TV brings East Germany the latest episode in the refugee story. Tom Porteus reports on the feelings of those who stay behind

ist Party's resistance to the Nazis in the 30s and 40s. Honecker himself spent ten of those years in gaol. His party built socialism in the GDR as a guarantee against a repeat of German fascism and militarism. Now the old men in East Berlin fear that *glasnost* threatens to undo all they have achieved. Honecker, who is now reported to be seriously ill, has been in and out of hospital since the Warsaw Pact summit last spring. And one can imagine that whatever his precise medical ailment, the reform crisis is a savage personal tragedy that aggravates the tearing at his abdomen.

The same stubborn signals keep coming from the leadership: no *glasnost*, no *perestroika*, no reform. As Honecker himself wrote in the party newspaper last week: "We are not moving backwards towards capitalism, but forwards to strengthen socialism." Even the Soviet press is now subject to censorship. The ageing East German leaders cannot tolerate anti-Soviet propaganda, even when it originates in the Soviet Union itself.

While the GDR's leaders struggle with their identity crisis, the rest of the country faces an equally traumatic problem. The exodus to West Germany of a considerable fraction of the East German population is unfolding before the people's very eyes. Every night West German TV brings East Germans the latest episode in the "refugee story": films of emigrés flocking across the open border between Hungary and Austria; would-be emigrés occupying West Germany's missions in several east European capitals in the hope of forcing through exit visas; reports of deteriorating relations between the GDR and Hungary; and interviews with tired East German youths explaining why they cannot bear socialism in the GDR a moment longer.

The East Germans didn't start leaving this summer. Much of the exodus is legal and has been proceeding quietly for more than a year. But now it is headline news and the daily reports on West German TV are creating an atmosphere of crisis in the GDR. This in turn encourages more to leave. "It's as regular as the soap operas and twice as depressing," says an East Berliner.

The exodus is a heavy emotional burden. Those who stay lose trust in close friends and relations, even in lovers, who may be the next to leave. And as more leave, the ones who stay become lonelier, even more distrustful. "One soon loses trust even in oneself in this atmosphere," said an East Berliner. "I don't want to have to think about leaving my home, my family, my work. But with so many others doing so, I have to face the question sooner or later."

Now that the summer holidays are over, factories, businesses, even the border police and the party are having to count the numbers of those who have not come back. One is put in mind of the graffiti on the Berlin Wall: "Last one out, turn off the lights."

But among the many who are staying, there is resentment as well as understanding for the ones who have left. "They are not refugees," said one, using the word with which the western media describe the emigrés. "Since when did refugees motor off to their new homes in their Trabants and Skodas, sure that they will be welcomed there with full citizenship and generous social security? We have real refugees living here. Palestinians and South Africans fleeing murderous governments supported by the west."

The exodus is a heavy burden. Those who stay lose trust in close friends and relations, who may be next to leave

Certainly, the East Germans flocking to West Germany are not fleeing economic hardship any more than they are escaping from a murderous government. Unlike the transient Poles desperately trying to sell a few trinkets on the black market in West Berlin, many of the East German emigrés are leaving a lot behind them: a good job, a comfortable flat, a TV, probably a car (if they don't take it with them), perhaps even a dacha in the countryside.

Although the exodus is a serious blow to the East German economy, there is plenty of food and high-quality goods in the shops in East Berlin. The GDR's "bürgerlich" standard of living is the envy of every socialist government. With a little economic aid from West Germany, the GDR has built quite a decent little socialist enclave.

But it looks a bit anaemic next to the wealth, power and glamour of the west as they are presented to East Germans in a nightly diet of commercials, soap operas, news and variety shows on West German TV. "Perhaps many of these emigrés are not going to be much better off in the west than they are here," said an East Berliner. "But at least they feel that over there they've reached the top. As long as they stay in the GDR, they will always feel like second-class citizens, overshadowed by the capitalist west."

There are many East Germans who see through the lavishness of opportunity offered by the west, and recognise the dangers that lurk not far beneath the surface. The writer, Heiner Müller, said in an interview published in the west last month: "Capitalist societies are now accelerating towards total destruction. The underdevelopment of countries like the GDR and the Soviet Union. . . offers a chance to put the brakes on this process."

Interestingly enough, there is even a small number of West Germans now settling in East Berlin, attracted by what they see as its potential for cultural engagement. But for now any such potential is poor compensation for the all-pervasive political climate in East Germany.

The state-run media discuss none of the urgent issues that the country now faces. From the politicians there has been no public reaction to the extreme changes of the time, except implausible denials that they are taking place. Official silence, or repetition of tired Stalinist formulae is increasing the angst and uncertainty that underlie the exodus.

Public dissent is muzzled. For most, political participation is limited to telling jokes about the country's leaders. A recent specimen, published in the West German weekly *Die Zeit*, runs thus: Gorbachev presents Honecker with a new car. "But it has no engine," says Honecker in dismay. "As long as everything is going down hill in your country," says Gorbachev, "you don't need an engine." "—And when things start to pick up again?"—"Then you won't be in the driving seat."

Gorbachev is the hero of the many politically minded East Germans who do want to stay in the GDR, and who are yearning to engage themselves in the country's political future. The Soviet press is avidly read by young intellectuals. "It's funny," said one, "in the Baltic States and elsewhere in the Soviet Union the people are screaming Russians out, but here they scream Russians in. They want to see a little *glasnost* here too."

For such people there is now some hope for change. According to western commentators, there are signs that some of the younger party cadres are impatient for a new political way, less authoritarian and more responsive to the changes of the times. But there is also the fear that the western powers, and particularly West Germany, are trying to use this will for change to impose their own capitalist brand of reform. If this happens, as it appears to be happening in Hungary and Poland, then even the most reform-minded East Germans fear the GDR will be swallowed up in a reunified capitalist, and increasingly right-wing Germany.

It is beginning to dawn on East Germans who don't want to see this happen that the GDR's only hope of survival is to take control of its future and to find a "third way" that avoids the obsolete divisions of the cold war and that does not lie at the mercy of the World Trade Centres sprouting on the other side of the Berlin Wall. ●

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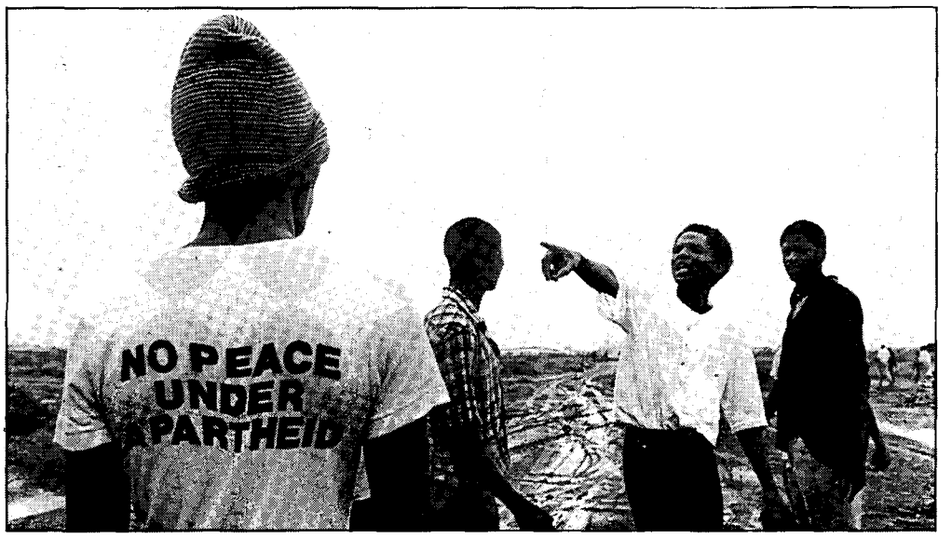
White mischief

Thatcher and Treurnicht have boxed in de Klerk. He must negotiate with South Africa's blacks, but can't afford to. R W Johnson explains



Afrapix/Network

The Leandra community defends itself against a vigilante attack. South Africa is bulging with violence

As President F W de Klerk surveys the South African political scene in the wake of last week's white election he cannot but realise how desperately close he came to several disasters. Electorally, his National Party just scraped home with an overall majority of nine. It was a narrow squeak. He has chosen to stress the overall majority for reform, but his party held off the challenge of Treurnicht's far right Conservative Party by desperately narrow margins —by just five votes in de Klerk's own old seat, by seven in another, and by 47 in a third.

In yet another constituency, Vanderbijlpark, the NP candidate Dr Gerrit Viljoen seemed fated to lose until he had the lucky break of his Conservative opponent being convicted for fraud in mid-campaign. It was an important fluke since Viljoen, a former Broederbond chairman, is the intellectual heavyweight of the cabinet and de Klerk's right hand man. All told the National Party held 14 seats with majorities of under 1,000, 13 of them against the CP.

Disaster of a different kind did actually occur in the Cape, with between 15 and 29 people dead (the figures are disputed) and hundreds hurt. In part at least, this seems to have been the result of a riot by the riot police. But it could have been even worse. Throughout the country the non-violent Defiance Campaign waged by the Mass Democratic Movement frequently threatened to tip over into such confrontations, for many of the young black militants and the young white police are just longing to slug it out.

In Durban I found myself in the midst of two riots in the last fortnight and while it's horrific enough to see young students reeling away, blood streaming from their heads after the police have shot them with birdshot, I mainly felt relief just that no one was left dead or blind. This may sound callous, but consider: last week, for example, at a black taxi rank near where I shop, one black shot another dead and badly wounded another. Several hundred people from the taxi queue, armed with knives and sticks, chased the gunman into the shopping arcade and hacked and stoned him to death.

To the local shopkeepers this mainly proves that the taxi rank should be moved. "Just last week a man was stabbed at the rank," said one shopkeeper. "It is getting ridiculous, something should be done about the place." Ridiculous. The point is simply that South Africa is a country now bulging with violence at every pore: even a taxi queue is armed, can kill. It is a place where, given the potential for slaughter, 15 or even 29 dead is not necessarily a lot. Meanwhile, maintaining police discipline has become almost as vital to this country as water.

De Klerk's top priority is to placate the international community sufficiently to prevent further escalation in the economic sanctions now hurting South Africa so badly. To this end he will invite all South African political groups to a "great Indaba" on devising a new constitution. This will quickly boil down to the question of what the preconditions of such talks are: no self-respecting black politician could sit down to talk to de Klerk while Mandela is still in jail, for example.

Several points must be kept in mind about such talks. One is that negotiation is being forced on de Klerk by international pressure, not by the strength of his internal opposition. The government still has the whip hand (and "whip hand" has a very exact meaning here) completely at home and really needs to play to the international gallery more than anything else. The African National Congress, for its part, has every reason to be scared of negotiation. It now has no guerrilla bases south of the equator and thus has virtually no means of its own of pressuring the government into concessions. Moreover, if it makes concessions to de Klerk, the movement will split and the Pan-African Congress line of rejecting all negotiations will gain much ground; but if it is too intransigent it will lose the international support on which it utterly depends. So the ANC, too, will be keener to play to the international gallery than actually to negotiate. So we are probably in for a long phoney war in which each side insists on its enthusiasm for negotiation but tries to avoid it in practice, trying to throw the blame for the lack of negotiation on to the other side.

There are two problems with this scenario. One is that Mrs Thatcher, if she is to defend her anti-sanctions line to the Commonwealth conference next month, would like a dramatic gesture from de Klerk now to show his good intent. The only measure which could be taken in the time allowed would be Mandela's release—which the government would like to save as a key ploy in the negotiation process and which it certainly would not wish to concede as a reward for the Defiance Campaign.

The other problem is that de Klerk can't afford to waste time. The challenge from Treurnicht's Conservative Party, which produced such a desperately close result this time, will be greater still in any future white election. So de Klerk needs to move the constitutional goalposts, not just by boundary delimitation to gerrymander against the CP, but perhaps by some dilution of the whole white electoral system to make a future CP victory impossible— and this has to be done quite soon so the system is well in place before the next election. This suggests both a timetable the ANC will find impossible and a piecemeal type of "reform" which both the ANC and the international community will rightly denounce.

At the moment, it seems possible that de Klerk may try to hold elections among South Africa's blacks to allow them to choose their own representatives for negotiations. Without doubt the ANC will boycott such elections, leaving de Klerk with the option of pursuing a settlement which excludes the ANC. No such settlement will be internationally acceptable.

So de Klerk, for all his power, is in a very tight spot. His entire previous career suggests he will respond to these challenges with a benign managerial style and crablike caution. The chances are very high that for all his determination to avoid the political paralysis that set in under P W Botha, he will find himself heading down much the same blind alleys. The words of that shopkeeper drift back: "It is getting ridiculous, something should be done about the place." That could apply to the whole country. ●

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POLITICAL COLUMN

High hopes

The SLD dust themselves down, and start all over again

At the end of a bad-tempered session debating their vanishing fortunes, the SLD still didn't know what had hit them: a political disaster, profligate financial management or the thud of Ian Wrigglesworth falling flat on his face.

Mr Wrigglesworth, now heading to be ex-president of his latest party, was saved by the innate practical caution that lies behind the sound and fury of aroused Liberals. Ian Wrigglesworth is their Aunt Sally because he manages to be both stiff and greasy at the same time, thus, quite contrary to his intentions, pleasing no one.

Sarah Benton

But that is not the point. The point is the one the unloved Wrigglesworth made: the party's deficit, the sacking of 20 staff, the inability to sustain campaigning and area staff, were not due to maladministration so much as "the financial consequences of our political problems."

And, happily for the leaders' fortunes, the "Grass Roots" members withdrew their motions demanding that all financial and administrative officers resign forthwith. To their further relief, the familiar voices of sturdy, put-upon northern-liberalism was heckled and jeered to boot. This was when Skipton's Claire Brooks, who is becoming a Cyril-Smith type figure of affectionate disregard, censured the new party as "centralist and authoritarian". They'd heard it all before. In fact, by the middle of the week, SLD leaders had little to fear.

That made this conference, unlike old Liberal conferences, and unlike SDP ones too. Eurofever has gripped the SLD as it has everyone else in politics. International meetings, usually the poor relations of the fringe sessions, drew big audiences. Gorbachev was mentioned more often than (in coy euphemism) David Owen. For Gorbachev has allowed firm unilateralists and lovers of Trident to walk cautiously out and explore their common ground.

This they found in the new defence green paper, "After the cold war". A product of the policy process the SLD inherited from the SDP, this document won universal praise from members, including CND's general secretary Meg Beresford. It confirmed CND's belief that defence policy must follow on from, not make, foreign policy. In fact, so great is the extent and speed of change in eastern Europe, that policy writers are able to be immensely optimistic whatever their starting position. In this world of collapsing boundaries and regrouping communities, anything is possible.

And indeed, as the subsequent debate on arms policy showed, the enthusiastic embrace of Open-Door Europe does not specify any particular defence system, other than the decision not to bomb Russia. Staying in Nato or getting out, opening the EC up to the whole of Europe or using the EC as a firm but friendly bank for the east, keeping nuclear weapons under wraps or directing them at new third world enemies (one delegate's fantasy)—nothing is definitively settled "After the cold war". But because anything is possible, the politics of defence do move again.

The SLD leadership prepared for the excision of Nato from their constitutional preamble with skill. That is, they supported its deletion in low-key and pragmatic terms. The debate on getting a commitment to British nuclear disarmament into the white paper (the next stage in the policy process) was less easily managed. That's because there is no common ground here. Those who want no such commitment argue simply that it would look bad. "This amendment gives comfort and aid to the enemies of this party," said Chris Walmsley. And in one of those logical sequences which Stalin perfected, he said that by allowing comfort to their enemies they would keep Thatcher in power, and thus the SLD would be "harming the cause of peace and disarmament".

Released from Dr Owen's snake-trap, the party is recovering its ability to claim radical causes as its own

Meanwhile, the Thatcher comforters argued the new environmental case—the nuclear circle from uranium extraction to bombs in the sky was environmentally damaging, said Ms Beresford. Our job, said Neville Presley, was to "lead and educate public opinion, not to follow it".

Now there is nothing in the world as smug as a Liberal, and no Liberal as smug as the one trumpeting the unique moral virtues of Liberalism. And there is nothing in the world as unprincipled as a Liberal trying to win a by-election. This unique combination of virtue and low cunning made up that ineffable tradition for which some Liberals are still in mourning.

This conference has not resolved the question of what sort of party it will be. But it is true that released from Dr Owen's snake-trap, the party is recovering its ability to claim radical causes as its own. At a packed and non-aerosol sweaty meeting, Jonathon Porritt paid tribute to them as the only political party with whom Greens could debate on equal terms—meaning only they had true green credentials.

What is news is that the radical edge is no longer coming from the die-hard Liberals, most of whom are sulking in their burrow threatening to take to the hills with Michael Meadowcroft's Liberal Party. (His non-appearance at a fringe meeting sparked cruel cries of "he's chickened out!"). At the moment, the van is being provided by the Simon Hughes's mobile which reliably chugs into view, 10 minutes late, at almost every fringe meeting. From a seemingly bottomless store of goodwill, he tosses out proposals for pacts, alliances, realignments and new politics—including a timely warning of the dangerous parochial limits of the die-hard favourite, community politics.

He shares his leader's (or perhaps the borrowing is the other way round) stricture of the greens for fetishing the land, although he has a fondness, not shared with Paddy, for the Communist Party. Indeed, Roy Blockley and Martin Jacques of the CP got two of the warmest receptions at conference fringe meetings.

If there are to be new alignments, they will be in England. That is, the challenges to the two Ugly Sisters (as this party loves to call them) come from the nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland, not the SLD. It's the future of England which is the test of whether Labour can again claim national hegemony or whether Britain, like the rest of Europe, will devolve into new regional or ethnic strongholds.

Despite this year's discovery by the SLD of the virtues of trade unionism and collective rights, and a reasonable demand from Alan Beith that the party shakes off its middle-class image, the political vacancy for the party exists not in such areas, but as the conscience of the consuming south. That'll do nicely.

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Enter the honest broker

What's the difference between a social worker and a care manager? Ken Edwards explains the coming revolution in community services

Sally and Richard Greenhill

Those whose needs are greatest may be better served, but the moderately dependent could suffer

The white paper on community care expected next month will herald the most far-reaching changes in social services since the Seebohm Report. That report paved the way 20 years ago for setting up local authority social services departments. The white paper, which follows the government's broad acceptance of Sir Roy Griffiths's report on community care, spells the end of generic social work as practised in them.

It means an end to separate social workers and home help organisers for elderly and disabled people. Enter the new breed of professional: care managers. Care management is not simply social work under a trendy label. It is a complete revolution in the social (that is, non-medical) care of dependent people.

Griffiths concluded that community care was in a mess. Responsibility was incoherently divided between health and local authorities, and there was no control over admission to residential care. He recommended that local authorities should have the lead responsibility for community care; a recommendation which stuck in the Prime Minister's throat but which she eventually had to accept in July, in the absence of any real alternative. But although local authority social services departments have been given the clear responsibility they were seeking, and promised the cash to go with it, they will be strongly discouraged from being monopoly providers of services.

Instead, their new role will be that of managing agencies: planning, funding and monitoring care which will in many cases actually be provided by the private and voluntary sectors. Griffiths calls this a "mixed economy of care". Crucial to this process is the notion of "individual packages of care". People requiring care will have their needs assessed individually, and a costed care plan drawn up, specifying the particular services they require and who is to provide them. This is where the care manager comes in.

Few departments are yet geared up to cope with the impending changes, which have enormous implications for training and reorganisation. Among the furthest ahead is Kent social services. Two years ago, anticipating Griffiths, Kent began a complete overhaul of its services for the elderly. By the beginning of next year it will have an integrated home care service for 6,500 elderly clients, incorporating the old home help and social work services, which were previously separate.

Mike Ballard is one of the new care managers. He is responsible for assessing the needs of old people living at home in an area of Maidstone. He has about 50 clients on his books at any one time. He oversees the work of 11 home helps and four community care assistants. Although a trained social worker, his present role is more akin to that of a broker: assessing need, deciding what kind of care is necessary and purchasing it on behalf of the client. (The community care assistants, for instance, are not employed by the department but self-employed, and contracted to provide particular services for particular clients.)

"What we're trying to do is get away from fitting the person into the services we provide," he says. "We take an objective look at people's needs—then see if we can fill them. We try to enable people not disable them, to look at the strengths they have to build on, in order to maintain their independence. A typical client might be an elderly lady living on her own, who is at the point where people are saying to her: 'You should be in a home.' Perhaps she can't cook properly, can't dress herself, has the odd fall.

"I would look at her needs, and I may decide she's isolated, so part of the package might be day care, or paying a community care helper to go in and just talk to her. I would look at her daily timetable: for example, each morning she may need help washing and dressing. Then perhaps she can put things in the oven but can't prepare a meal, so she could be provided with the components of a meal, or a frozen meal. I would look at what an occupational therapist might be able to provide, or at the possibility of an alarm system."

Ballard began his social work career in a generic social work team in Kent, similar to those in every department in the country. He was dealing with a mixed caseload, heavily weighted towards work with children. He then left Kent for three years to run his own business, but returned to work with the elderly.

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He feels like a pioneer, and the consensus among his colleagues is that this is a better way of working, offering more satisfaction and a better service. Although very far from a hard-nosed businessman, he says his commercial experience helped him with one of the most controversial parts of the care manager's role: costing services and managing a budget. For most social workers this will be entirely new.

His boss, Kent's assistant director of social services, Adrian Bishop, says care management is an enhancement of the social work role: "social work with a chequebook". But what happens when the account goes overdrawn?

"Sometimes we have to make invidious choices about what we can afford to spend," he says. "But service users can accept the answer no, if the reason why is explained to them. What gets up people's noses is social workers swanning around promising the earth but not being able to deliver." Kent is now planning similar changes for its mental handicap services: 16 care management teams will be established over the next three years.

Critics of "social work with a chequebook", however, say that while the end result may be better and more coherent services for those whose needs are greatest, those who are only moderately dependent may end up being excluded from care plans. In a sense, it is the opposite argument from that deployed against the government's plans for GP budgets: the very frail and severely handicapped will get a better deal, but an increasing number of semi-dependent people will be left out in the cold, unless they can afford to purchase their own care.

Whether or not this will be so depends, as always, on the amount of cash the government allows local authorities. At present, £900 million a year is spent on social security to keep people in private residential homes. The government says a proportion of this will be transferred to local authorities, starting in April 1991, to fund all forms of community care.

But Gerald Wistow, head of the Nuffield Institute's new community care unit in Leeds, which will be helping local and health authorities to cope with the changes, says people are "naturally cynical" about the government's long-term plans. "I'd be surprised if the amount of cash available will be related to the growth in the social security budget in the past," he says. "The government's intention, after all, is to cap social security spending."

Local authorities of widely different political colours welcome many of the Griffiths changes. The absurdity of the home help and social work services being accountable to different line managements will be a thing of the past. Strong financial incentives for councils to get out of the business of actually running homes for the elderly will at least be balanced by increased local authority control over residential care, both public and private.

Nobody knows what level of care the government intends local authorities to provide, let alone how much money there will be to back this up. Those looking to the white paper for clarification are likely to be disappointed. The arguments could continue right up to April 1991.

Welfare Watch

Margin rules

Tony Lynes on the scandal of a 110 per cent tax rate

George and Liz B receive the basic married couple's pension of £69.80 and an earnings-related addition of £11.50. Their rent and rates, after deducting housing benefit, come to £9.92, and they have to pay the landlord £2.54 a week for cleaning and maintenance. That leaves a net income of £68.84.

If they received only the basic pension of £69.80, they would be £1.14 a week better off. A pensioner couple can claim income support to bring their income up to £71.85 a week with maximum housing benefit covering the whole of the rent and 80 per cent of the rates or poll tax. Income support also provides for landlord's service charges (though not for amenities like heating). On a basic pension plus income support, therefore, George and Liz would get £71.85 a week, out of which they would have to pay 20 per cent of the rates, leaving £69.98 net.

The effect of George's earnings-related pension, therefore, instead of raising the couple's income by £11.50 a week, is to reduce it by £1.14. Which is just the kind of poverty trap situation that last year's "reform" of means-tested benefits was supposed to prevent. What went wrong?

In principle, income support involves a 100 per cent tax on each additional £1 of income. For those above income support level, housing benefit is reduced by up to 85p for every additional £1 of income (65p comes off the rent rebate and 20p off the rate rebate). The combined effect should have been to tax George's earnings-related pension at something between 85 and 100 per cent.

The 110 per cent tax rate is due to the fact that no allowance is made for the landlord's service charge in calculating housing benefit. Thus, when income rises to a level at which income support is no longer payable, the service charge has to be met out of income previously available for other needs.

Even higher tax rates can result. For instance, if the service charge were £5 a week instead of £2.54, George's £11.50 earnings-related pension would result in a net income loss of £3.60, equivalent to a tax of 131 per cent. Or, if the earnings-related pension were only £5 a week, just enough to wipe out income support entitlement, it would produce a net income loss of £2.09—a 142 per cent tax on the extra £5 pension. Similar situations can arise from the fact that mortgage interest, like service charges, is covered by income support but not taken into account in the housing benefit calculation for those above income support level.

Marginal tax rates of 80 per cent or over are an inevitable consequence of means-testing on its present scale, but tax rates of 130 or 140 per cent are simply a result of failure to coordinate the rules of different means-tests. They should not be allowed to continue.

Privatisation

Take the money and run

Andrew Connor reports on the latest way to bust the public sector

A recent seminar organised by the huge accountancy group Peat Marwick McLintock (PMM) confirmed the emergence of a new emphasis in privatisation. PMM proclaims that management buyouts in the public sector present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for managers to forge a new path to wealth. It hopes that the entrepreneurial spirit will liberate public services from the twin pressures of legislation and restrictive organisation. With advisers' fees of £20,000 to £50,000 a time, who can blame them?

Buyouts have proliferated in the deregulated bus industry since 1985. Current targets are NHS information and ambulance services and local authority direct labour organisations. The groundwork being laid by the NHS white paper makes it conceivable that future buyout bids could feature self-governing hospitals, while Sir Roy Griffiths's reforms could have the same impact on community care services.

In public authorities the principle of placing contracts for services has gradually been extended to internal activities—the "internal market". In response, service sections, such as computing, are placed on a "quasi-trading" basis. They operate independent internal accounting, surviving mainly on contracts with the central authority and competing for work from other sources. The management thereby gets enough practice at running its own show to become frustrated at the often stifling financial restrictions. For example the "board" of West Midlands Regional Health Authority's management services division (MSD) found itself prevented from investing £2 million on new computers due to NHS capital expenditure limits.

One possibility in these circumstances is that the managers, in their own time, form their own company, ubiquitously called "Newco". With help from advisers such as PMM, and a pithy business plan, finance is raised and a deal clinched over a period of months, often with the authority's tacit support. The personnel director at West Midlands management services used to specialise in hiving off viable subsi-

Continued on page 26

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diaries from engineers GKN. A director of regional services (management services, supplies, blood transfusion) was appointed in 1985 with a brief to review its operation. Thus the question asked about public sector buyout teams is: did they jump or were they pushed?

The shroud of "commercial confidentiality" renders it impossible for the public to find out if a fair price has been paid. West Midlands Health Authority's selling price for its £10 million turnover management services is reported to be a knockdown £750,000: less than half of a year's trading surplus. Of course the auditors, Peat Marwick McLintock, will assess the suitability of the price, set by the authority and its advisers, Peat Marwick McLintock.

Although first in the field, the West Midlands sell-off is being emulated in other health regions. In May, regional health authorities had to produce proposals for shedding "non-core" services like computing, ambulances, blood transfusion, estates and legal departments. Speculation already surrounds most NHS computing sections amid a scramble of predatory conglomerates and buyout teams. Mersey region has already sold its computer services to a software house.

Buyouts present unique tactical problems for unions. Outright opposition may result in a straightforward sell-off instead. To limit the damage, some unions have flirted cautiously with Employee Share Ownership Plans (ESOPs), in which a trust disseminates a fixed percentage of shares to the employees. The norm is a minority ESOP, aimed at improving workers' commitment and feeling of belonging rather than control.

The challenge for Labour is to redefine social ownership away from centralised bureaucracy. Two local authorities have already insisted on substantial (49 per cent) ESOP-based employee ownership in privatised bus companies: Tyneside Busways and Yorkshire Rider. Only the People's Provincial Bus Company in Gosport has gone for a total employee buyout.

Unions in West Midlands management services are aiming for a share scheme with a strong enough collective holding to veto major events such as stock market flotation: a tall order, as ESOPs normally require management cooperation. At the PMM seminar, the managing director of a successful bought-out bus company warned against exactly this kind of collective control, especially if orchestrated by trade unions. Ideally the buyout team's business plan has an exit route after three to five years in its private agenda; when the born-again entrepreneur will take the money and run after a stock market flotation. ESOPs can screw up the exit route and spoil the big pay-off.

Management buyouts are no-fuss privatisation. The bid comes in without the authority lifting a finger. Critics of government policies may quietly dismiss the sections concerned as peripheral to mainstream public service activity. But today's sale of an NHS computer services division may be tomorrow's liberation of a self-governing hospital, presented as a new and fresh solution by teams of high-tech surgeons—and their advisers.

Judy Stevens

Adoption

Mixed feelings

Claire Sanders talks to black adoptive parents

When Mary read the press coverage of a mixed-race baby taken from its foster mother at 17 months to be placed with a black family, she was "extremely angry". The story is dear to her heart—she is Afro-Caribbean, she adopted her black daughter two years ago, and she is a social worker.

She is angry because she feels that the case, billed as "race heartbreak", is more about the pain of fostering than race; because it has been used to jeopardise same-race placements which to her are necessary for black children; and because the voices of black people willing to adopt have been absent. Local authorities across the political spectrum accept that same-race placements are preferable, but that there have to be sufficient resources to implement such a policy. Mary is one such resource. How does the system appear to her?

Mary, despite her job as a social worker in north London, found the adoption process daunting: "At times I wondered how people with no idea of the system cope." She also knows that there is no shortage of black people who are willing to adopt, but that they are not always in touch with their local authorities. As a social worker she is concerned to reach these people so that black children can have as wide a range of prospective homes as possible. She is also deeply concerned that there are so many black children in care. "Some social workers are too quick to write off black families and don't consider care within the extended family," she says.

Mary first thought about adopting a child in 1974. "I rang up my local social services department and they told me that they had no one there capable of assessing black families. I left my name and address and heard no more." In 1986 she decided to try again. A married woman with two sons, she wanted a daughter. "For a lot of black people the first thing they think of is the financial aspect. Local authorities say they will help but in the end it is very difficult to get any money." There is no obligation upon authorities to give adoption allowances—when they are granted they average about £40 per week, ranging from over £200 a week for severely disabled children to token payments for others.

She also feels that the assessment process can be off-putting for black families. "Of course, it has to be thorough, but it's very traumatic to be asked extremely personal questions by a white social worker. We had to explain our daily relationships, whether we smacked our children or not." She feels that many of the questions are geared to white families. "They fail to take into account the nature of the extended family within my community. It is nothing unusual for me to pack the kids off to friends, aunts, uncles or grandparents when they get too much. I found it hard to get this across."

While waiting for her medical check-up (part of the adoption procedure) Mary chatted to black women in the waiting room. "One woman in particular was really keen to adopt but said that she had no idea of how to go about it." This is a common refrain. "Many black people want to adopt because they know there are black children in care and they want to help them. As well as wanting the child, they feel they have a moral duty."

Dorothy Kuya is a woman of mixed race who has sought to adopt for the last two years. She has not yet been successful and feels that the

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system is arbitrary: "I don't know on what basis decisions are made. I feel that there should be guidelines so that there are some objective criteria by which you know you are being judged. I am single and over 50 and I don't know how far this counts against me. If I knew I had no chance I would not go through the whole procedure as it can be very painful."

Her attempts to adopt have been hampered by staff shortages, which stopped the adoption department in her local authority operating for a while. Her social worker is a generic (non-specialist) worker with an overwhelming caseload; when she went on maternity leave Dorothy was left with no support for about six months. Like Mary she shares a concern that all the social workers she spoke to were white: "In one incident it became apparent that I knew more about a cultural aspect of a child's background than the social worker did."

Workers in Westminster social services also feel that press coverage of same-race placements has been damaging. "The case of the 17-month baby was more about fostering than race," reiterates Chris Hussle, assistant divisional director for adoption and fostering. "A part of a foster parent's job is to make the child's transition to a new family easy."

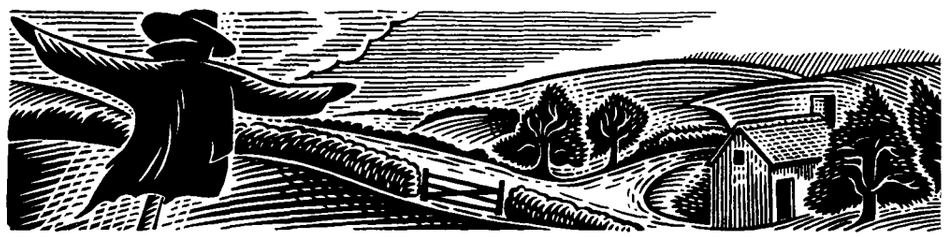
In the year 1988-89, Westminster council made no trans-racial placements. Out of the 11 children placed who were black, seven were of mixed parentage and were placed in families of precise racial matchings. Alan Simpson, district director of social services, is keen to stress that Westminster is "just a middle-of-the-road Conservative authority tackling the issue in the same way as any other local authority. Like everyone else we still have a lot to learn."

Much has changed over the last ten years. "We learned that you couldn't approach ethnic minorities with the same bureaucratic machinery that had been used for white families. We had to challenge our own assumptions about black culture," says Simpson. The authority has made a concerted effort to recruit workers from the many ethnic minority groups in Westminster and to get a good racial mix on their adoption panel: "It would be nice to have black judges as well."

Waltham Forest social services has a similarly successful policy. They now have a surplus of Asian families on their books who are willing to foster and adopt, and act as a resource for other boroughs. "We found that once we had appointed Asian workers and worked together to approach the Asian community, then word of mouth took over," says Charles Waddicor, assistant director of social services.

The social workers and black people to whom I spoke were not worried about whether same-race placements were preferable—they clearly are when well-resourced—but about the fact that there are so many black children in care. They all want to know why. Last year the organisation Black and In Care had its grant cut. The Commission for Racial Equality was unable to get funding for research into this area. Health minister David Mellor would do better giving the £150,000 he has put into studying trans-racial adoption into research on why black children are in care in the first place.

FRINGE BENEFITS



Colin Ward plays parlour games while the nation is smothered by its own heritage

Those innocent parlour games of categorising people, that we all play, usually arise by accident. We divide people into Martha and Mary types, regardless of the biblical implications of the story. Isaiah Berlin alleges that he found in some obscure classical author, the line "The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." He went on to classify some of the great names of history as one or the other of these woodland creatures, but got stuck when he reached Tolstoy.

Berlin devoted a brilliant little book to his hypothesis that Tolstoy was by nature a fox, but believed in being a hedgehog. Colin MacInnes devised a similar game in the columns of *New Society*. He divided us into Jews (moralising, prophetic, radical-traditional), Greeks (life-loving, crafty, hedonistic-spiritual), and Romans (authoritarian, organisational, grandiose, rhetorical).

He too plotted well-known names on this psychological triangle, finding, for example, Harold Macmillan to be a diluted Roman posing as a Greek, and Evelyn Waugh, a Greek who wished he was a Roman. Similarly, he found De Gaulle to be a Jew who had read a lot of Roman literature. And he concluded, "So what, dear reader, are you and your friends?"

My contribution to the parlour games repertoire was more prosaic than theirs. Trying to find a way of categorising children's responses to their environments, I concluded that they could be divided between the *antiquarians*, who cherish an environment precisely because of its associations with continuity and familiarity, *explorers*, who positively enjoy and savour the change from one home to another in a different habitat, and *neophiliacs* for whom the surroundings inherited from the past have a smell of oppression and deprivation, while the new, just because it is new, promises hope and a more expansive life. And of course it applies to adults too, with the difference that the usual battering we get from life pushes us into different attitudes from those we start out with.

I used to say that I woke in the morning a neophiliac, spent the day as an explorer, and went to bed a weary antiquarian. It applies to many other aspects of life besides the environment.

What brought the whole theme back into my mind was the series of TV programmes made by Patrick Nuttgens, *The Home Front*. He introduced bits of old film from the 40s, 50s and 60s, which revealed a nation of neophiliacs, glorying in the new world of housing, with modern architects as heroes. But when he went around the country last year interviewing tenants and residents, he was, as an architect, shocked by the dislike and contempt people told him they felt for his profession.

So he set up a radio discussion a few weeks ago to unravel what went wrong, and a group of us sat round his breakfast table in North Yorkshire, playing the game of neophiliacs and antiquarians. As in all such discussions we were typecast and fell into our appropriate roles. John Donat recalled the excitement of his youth. "I came into architecture in the year of the Festival of Britain, and it was *electric*. We were moving into a new world."

Denise Robertson, filling the vox pop role, talked about the reassuring grandeur of St George's Hall, Liverpool, and of yearnings for cottages with roses round the door. Challenged for her backward-lookingness, she replied: "If the new was good perhaps we would welcome it, but the new is not good. That's why we hanker for the past, because the alternative is not an appetising one." My own task was to sidestep the issue of design and to stress that what matters is the principle of dweller control.

But behind the games people play, there is a huge shift in the national mood, of which architecture is an obvious and visible sign. In the world of art, patrons are throwing out their abstract impressionists and buying up Victorian genre paintings. In penal policy we have abandoned the rehabilitative experiments and rely on a policy of containment. In education, every ministerial statement indicates a yearning for the no-nonsense utilitarianism of the school boards of a century ago.

I don't think the architectural change of mood is necessarily part of the same syndrome. It is a swing of the pendulum from the arrogant technological romanticism of the postwar decades. But it is skilfully exploited politically, along with the heritage boom and the "upstairs-downstairs" country house legend. Cultivate the conservation of an imaginary past to cover up the opportunism of the present, and hire advertising agencies to ram home the message.

Apart from the professional neophiliacs and a handful of intrepid explorers, we are all antiquarians now.

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Homage to the Aborigines

As a child, John Pilger was encouraged to view Aborigines simply as a menace. Pilger now sees that the history and the experience of the Aborigines have been denied by white Australia. He weaves together personal memories and public history to indict his own nation.

This is an extract from "A Secret Country" by John Pilger, published 21 September by Jonathan Cape

La Perouse, 1951. It was one of those moments in childhood when you stand outside yourself, outside "normal" experience. The silhouettes related to no one. They were not meant to exist. They were meant to have "died off". Certainly few adults spoke of them as if they existed and, anyway, they were not counted, unlike the nation's sheep.

But they were not invisible.

I would go to La Perouse and stand on the sand hills and look at them. I was not supposed to do this, although no one had said

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so; it was assumed. It was not that these non-existent people, who lived in fruit-box houses, were dangerous, although no one could be sure. They were simply part of the collective "menace" of vagrants and alcoholics who came here for refuge and truants and teenagers for "no good", such as sex, and occasionally to drown in a surf that boiled and spat. There was also rusted iron and broken glass that made the sand scabrous and slashed your feet.

My friends and I—especially Pete who came all the way from Bondi with me—would dare ourselves to walk down the sweep of the sand towards the fruit boxes. The silhouettes then would become faces and eyes which stared. The houses, or shanties, had wire-mesh doors to keep out the squadrons of flies which came over from dumped garbage; "Dump it at La Perouse" was an expression. Behind each wire door there seemed to be a woman, watching and still.

The flies were stuck on the children's eyelids; and this was fascinating to us. Some of the children kept one eye closed. Perhaps because everybody in Australia squinted, this did not seem odd. That some could barely see at all was not known to us. Almost all of them had what I later heard described as "the Abo H": permanent lines of mucus from the nose to the upper lip. That they were racked by preventable infection we did not know.

The boys of my age wore ragged "army disposal" shorts with multiple buckles. The girls wore dresses made from sugar bags. We would gape at each other as if through an impenetrable wall of glass. The only exchange I can recall was when Pete was told by one of them to "get rooted". The only time I saw them laugh was when they were diving for pennies. A large white man, who sold boomerangs made into ink stands, would bring people to watch the diving. These "tourists" would throw the pennies.

Men would appear from time to time, mostly from behind the houses and often with a bottle. They wore "cowboy clothes", and whenever they caught sight of us they would go back behind the house. Shouting abuse at them was acceptable behaviour. Some of the men would collect behind La Perouse Cable Station, which was built in the last century to link Australia and New Zealand by telephone. There they had a large, old pram, from which came the clinking of bottles. They would argue with each other. Once one of them smashed a bottle and put it in another's face. This had just happened when I got off the La Perouse tram, and it was exciting to run and see the pools of blood in the grass and a cop shouting, "What d'yer think yer doin', yer black bastards?"

La Perouse was one of the few Sydney beaches not given an Aboriginal name. Nearby there were Bondi, Tamarama, Coogee and Maroubra. But Count Jean-François Gallup de La Perouse was remembered here, on the headland to Botany Bay. In one of history's coincidences, he had appeared with two ships in Botany Bay on 26 January 1788, just after the arrival of Britain's "First Fleet" under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip.

At school we were invited to sympathise with the Count. Had he arrived a few days earlier he could have "claimed" Australia for France, and we would be speaking French now. We would try to imagine being French, and there was general agreement that we were fortunate to have been spared this unfathomable alternative to the higher calling of being British. No one seriously considered that Australia already belonged to people who had been there for millennia, who represented hundreds of "nations" speaking their own languages and living in their own countries.

La Perouse Aboriginal women: what their people are seeking are merely basic human rights, they are not asking for unmerited privileges

When the British invaded, they declared Australia "Terra Nullius", empty land, and for the purpose of historiography, those who inhabited this "empty land" did not exist. And subsequent generations accepted the nuance that in this "empty land" the original people were "dying off".

From 1952, when I entered high school, a standard history textbook was *Man Makes History: World History from the Earliest Times to the Renaissance*, by Russel Ward. It sold more than 200,000 copies. This is an extract:

> Boys and girls often ask, "What's the use of history?"
>
> Answer: There are still living today in Arnhem Land people who know almost no history. They are Aboriginal tribesmen who live in practically the same way as their forefathers and ours did, tens of thousands of years ago... We are civilised today and they are not. History helps us to understand why this is so.

"They are people who know almost no history... We are civilised and they are not." Lake Mungo is far from La Perouse, deep in the Australian continent. The hills of sand rise here like breaking waves petrified. Down their line pink cockatoos fall and ascend. These are the walls of China which have marked the desert bed of Lake Mungo since the end of the Ice Age 15,000 years ago. Before that, there was an inland sea and glaciers on snowy mountains; and it was perilously cold. The first Australians lived here and survived the convulsions of these changes. At first they collected mussels at the lake's shore and fished for golden perch with woven barrier nets. When the heat came and the lake vanished, they adapted to seed; and endured.

When I went there in 1967, Lake Mungo was part of the Gol Gol sheep station, of which little remained. There was the cavernous woolshed, built in 1869 by Chinese labourers who had come to find gold, and there was a picture of an old Scottish church, St Mungo, which had hung in the original homestead. The distinction of Gol Gol, I was told, was that 50,000 sheep were shorn here every season. That it was one of the places where the world's oldest civilisation had begun was known only to the legatees of this civilisation, who then did not officially exist.

In 1969 the first discovery was made. It was a human skeleton remarkably similar to that of a contemporary person, and it was of a young woman who had been cremated in what appeared to be a religious ceremony 26,000 years ago. The most recent previous discovery was of the skeleton of a very tall man who lived perhaps 30,000 years ago. The upper part of his body had been covered in ochre, its earliest known use, which indicated religious ritual and the

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cultural investments of art, dance and song that maintain Aboriginal civilisation today.

Until recently white Australians knew little about this. Guided by a profound sense of racial superiority and colonial insecurity, the white nation denied itself the knowledge that something unique had been sustained in its adopted land. In northern Australia, a great rock, the Obiri, gave up its secrets to white researchers only in the 1960s. Standing where the East Alligator River flows along the escarpment of Arnhemland, the Obiri is a cathedral of the Gagadju and Kunwinjku peoples, whose galleries of paintings are here. The significance of these paintings has been compared with the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone, with which the secrets of ancient Egypt were unlocked.

The Obiri paintings predate the pharaohs by 20,000 years. They are more sophisticated than the cave drawings at Lascaux in France, by which the European tribes have measured their civilisation. Unlike paintings at the European pre-glacial sites, the Australian pictures are dynamic portrayals of life as it was lived; and their line extends unbroken to strange stick figures in broad-brimmed hats, the British "settlers" of the nineteenth century. Now included belatedly in the world Heritage List, the Obiri's galleries of paintings are said to be "perhaps the oldest and most significant expression of human creativity... the longest record of any group of people".

During the 1960s, I spent much time travelling in the Americas, Africa, India and the Pacific. I began to set the experience of these societies against my own, and this was something of a revelation. In Africa I had seen sufferers of the ancient eye disease, trachoma, which, if left untreated, scars the eyelids and causes ulcers and eventual blindness. Trachoma is found only in the impoverished, overcrowded conditions of the "developing world", with one exception: Australia. In Malawi, standing in a camp full of children sent blind from trachoma, I saw again the "squinting" children of La Perouse.

In South Africa I was greeted warmly by white people, mostly of English origin, who spoke about "good old Aussie" and cricket and beer drinking. They alluded cautiously, wistfully, to a land without blacks. What they meant was a land with "perfect blacks"—blacks who were there but who were reckoned not to be there.

These English South Africans believed themselves to be liberal people, proud of their distinction from the "uncivilised" Afrikaners on the veld, bullwhips behind their backs. Most of these liberal people had not seen, or had not wished to see the fringes of their towns and cities, where people lived in cardboard houses without running water and behind barbed wire.

I took the train to Soweto, and saw the urban dust bowl which ran to caramel in the rain, and the red eyes and yellow teeth, melon bellies and stick legs, and the aura of decay and despair. Back in Johannesburg and Capetown, I told the liberal people what I had seen, and they stood around the barbecue and listened respectfully, shaking their heads. They might well have been on the other side of the Indian Ocean. I had glimpsed my own country in theirs.

I was banned from South Africa in 1967 and shortly afterwards returned to Australia. The day of my return, a national referendum was held, producing a remarkable result. More than 90 per cent of the Australian electorate voted to give the Australian government the constitutional right to legislate justice for the Aboriginal people. No referendum anywhere in modern times had produced such an overwhelming, positive result. Aborigines were then at the mercy of state governments and institutions, which had much in common with their counterparts in Pretoria and Alabama. Now the federal government had an "historic mandate" to intervene. This made Australia *appear* different from South Africa, and newspaper editorials underlined this point with pride.

The flight to Alice Springs had plenty of empty seats. In 1967, outback Australia was a land without conga-line tourism. When the plane had refuelled and headed back to Sydney, the airport fell silent. At the tea and coffee bar stood silent men wearing shorts and long socks, carrying attachè cases. On the wall a display of teatowels with Aboriginal motifs was black with flies. The hands of the men wearing shorts and long socks moved like windscreen wipers against a storm of flies. Silence and flies: then, with dusk, a light that burnished the earth.

Everything in the "red centre" of Australia is imbued with this light. The walls of the Macdonnell Ranges, which stand behind Alice Springs like an amphitheatre, glow with it, as if the source is within the stone itself. The ghost gums that rivet heaven and earth glisten with it. Shadows seem only fleeting. The horizon is a line of fire, snuffed and consumed by a deep night with stars like ice. This is a place of artists.

The Papunya people now survive by their art, whose complex abstract dot design is recognised in the world as a unique form. For many years they kept it secret; it was said to be the expression of black paganism or it was dismissed as "ashtray art". Albert Namatjira's art, on the other hand, followed a European form and was not suppressed. But the artist died.

Above the reception desk of my hotel in Alice Springs was a print of a Namatjira watercolour, "Jay Creek Country". That the artist was accepted was indicated by the beer mats tacked around its frame: an expression of the local culture. According to one estimate, people in the Northern Territory are the third greatest consumers of alcohol in the world, said to drink 21 litres of pure alcohol per person every year.

By the mid-1970s world tourism had found Alice Springs. Muzak-contaminated hotels and shopping malls were built. An "international beerfest" was proclaimed. An ordinance banning the drinking of alcohol within two kilometres of "licensed premises" ensured that blacks filled the police cells as they drank mostly in the open. The only Aborigines many tourists were likely to see on Fridays and Saturdays were those represented in fibreglass in a "tourist complex", built like a McDonald's hamburger concession and announcing itself as "the world's biggest dreamtime... an experience not to be missed".

No tourists were taken to the Palms, an Aboriginal village near Alice, where many of the old people continue to defy their life expectancy of 48 years: an age beyond which most Aborigines do not survive and which is 25 years less than the life expectancy of whites. When I was there, the Palms was flooded and the mud lay in the lavatory-style shelters, almost up to the level of the beds.

In the State of Queensland, officially a "tourist paradise", Aboriginal cemeteries are widespread, yet difficult to find. The cemetery on Palm Island is a case in point. Palm is one of the most beautiful islands on the Great Barrier Reef, yet few outsiders take the short flight from Townsville. Established in 1918 as a detention camp for Aboriginal men, women and children convicted of such "crimes" as homelessness, rebelliousness and drunkenness, Palm Island has changed on the surface. While people are free to come and go, overcrowding, malnutrition, alcoholism and a plethora of other diseases remain. When I first went to Palm Island in 1980 an epidemic of gastro-enteritis had hospitalised 130 people. Two years later two researchers discovered in the records of the Queensland Health Department that Aboriginal deaths from common, infectious diseases were up to 300 times higher than the white average and among the highest in the world. In Palm Island's cemetery, overlooking waves breaking gently on the Barrier Reef, many of the headstones bear the names of children.

In the winter of 1987 I returned to Alice Springs with film-makers Alan Lowery and Alec Morgan. We looked for the family of Albert Namatjira and found them living beside an abattoir, two miles from land Albert had not been permitted to buy. They were there under sufferance of the Northern Territory Lands Department, in tenuous possession of one tree and four tin outhouses. It was terribly cold. When the wind kicked up the red dirt, it stung those at ground level. Reg, son of Oscar and grandson of Albert, wore his woollen hat almost down to his neck as he sat cross-legged and painted.

Then an ambulance arrived. Two white nurses lifted out a frail old black man and led him to a place on the dirt between Reg and the dogs. One of the nurses patted the old man on the head and said, "See you Tuesday". They had delivered Oscar "home" for a few days. The night before they had found him climbing out of the window of a nursing home, trying to make his way back to the camp.

Son and grandson of the great Albert remain in abject poverty—as do some 5,000 Aboriginal artists in the Northern Territory, even though their art has an estimated market value of $A5 million. In 1988, with Australia fashionable in the United States, the owner of a Los Angeles gallery visited the Northern Territory and took away Aboriginal art worth $A52,600 for a special exhibition. She also commissioned a series of bark paintings, but later cancelled the order, complaining the artists' prices, between $A60 and $A750 an item, were too high. When the

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Los Angeles exhibition opened, its prices amounted to $A650,000. Aboriginal artists like Reg Namatjira earn an average of $A700 a year, on which subsistence is not possible.

I drove west from Alice to the former mission at Hermannsburg. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it," warned an inscription, dated 21 September 1986, on the small sandstone church. Although few Aborigines were thus blessed, the remains of the settlement, with the bones of a "T" Model Ford at its centre, offer a testimonial to the stoicism of the Lutherans. Here, encased in woollen suits and high collars, they performed such fated tasks as translating the New Testament into the language of the Aranda, a people whose own God predated Jesus Christ by thousands of years and require no such manual: only land.

Since the Northern Territory Land Rights Act in 1976, Hermannsburg has been owned by its 700 former residents. Three-quarters of the people, mostly stockmen, have set up "outstations"—cattle ranches—where they are self-supporting and can lead a modified traditional life, free from the dependencies of alcohol and "the welfare".

Wallace Rockhole outstation is run by Barry Abbott, his cousin Mark, and their relatives. They broke even in 1987 and could afford to hire a helicopter for the muster. They wear checked shirts, wide hats and Western boots and drive Toyota trucks. Theirs is a familiar style and swagger. It is one of Australia's hidden ironies that its finest cowboys are black.

The confidence of people in the outstation movement represents something new and profound in the Aboriginal world: renaissance. Aboriginal population figures reflect this indirectly. Between 1982 and 1987 the number of Aborigines increased from 160,000 to more than 227,000, an astonishing rise of more than 42 per cent. Although the black birth rate is twice that of the white, this alone does not account for the increase. The truth is that many Australians are now proud to declare themselves Aborigines.

Whites have grown used to drawing patronising distinctions between full-blooded Aborigines and those of mixed parentage. "Half-caste" and "quarter-caste" are terms of derision. Although there are important differences between, say, the urban young and the more conservative tribal Aborigines, *all* Aborigines, regardless of their background and shade of skin, consider themselves one people with a common culture and struggle for survival. In recent years this long-suppressed sense of nationhood has found, against the odds, renewed and vibrant expression. With the establishment in the 1970s of the first Aboriginal medical and legal services, and land councils based on the traditional structure of the clans and linguistic groups, Aboriginal unity and self-assertion have grown steadily.

The renaissance has not needed white backing or approval. It has come from within, from the notion and spirit of "Aboriginality" and has had a momentum of its own. It is also intensely political. Aboriginal Australians have produced some of the most sophisticated political activists anywhere.

One man who personifies the renaissance is

After 200 years / Cambridge University Press

Teaching a corroboree dance to school kids, at Fitzroy Crossing, Kimberley

Pat Dodson, whose quiet anger and generosity leave few unmoved. A descendant of the Yaoro people in the Kimberley region of Western Australia, Pat was one of seven children orphaned when he was ten years old. Sent to a Catholic missionary school, he was ordained, at the age of 27, the first Aboriginal Catholic priest. But, as so often happened, his Aboriginality conflicted with his Christianity, specifically with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. Put in charge of a mission south of Darwin, he was criticised for introducing reforms which restored Aboriginal ceremonials and placed them within a Christian context. He left the priesthood in 1981 and joined the land rights movement as national co-ordinator of the Federation of Land Councils.

When I met Pat Dodson in Alice Springs in 1987, I asked him to explain "Aboriginality". "Well, it means the sense of *belonging*," he said... "to family, to where you've come from, and of knowing what your spirit is, that has given you life, and knowing the tradition that relates to the area of country you come from. [It's] a bond between people from one part of Australia and people from another... a sense of rapport, a sense of understanding and brotherhood... a sense not just brought about by common suffering and oppression, but the fact that we are the unique survivors.

"You see, after years of holocaust... there is a certain genius not extinguished. [It's] not a genius in the sense of being highly intellectual, but in the sense of something special in us that needs to be nurtured and cultivated and brought more and more into the light."

I said I was puzzled by the apparent lack of bitterness among Aborigines. "I can recall," he said, "being very angry at one point and frustrated... simply not knowing which direction to go, of being up against all kinds of forces. But then I listened to an older person like my grandfather, who talks in terms of the spirits that give life to the winds and the trees, and the sun and the sea, and that no one controlled that spirit; and that despite the inhumanity and injustice, mankind must be seen in this broader context. And this was a man who had suffered at the ends of the whips of pastoralists. He was not speaking from a sense of stoicism. He was saying that the total human experience includes an ability to try to see what is in another human being."

During only his second visit to an Aboriginal community in more than four years as Prime Minister, Bob Hawke said that his government wanted a "compact" with black Australians. When asked what this meant, he refused to say. One year later, with international interest in the treatment of Aborigines at its peak, Hawke said he hoped a "treaty" would be possible by 1990. When asked what this meant, he gave only scant detail. He made no mention of land rights. The conservative opposition promised to repeal any such "treaty", thus threatening the security of the present land rights legislation laws in the Northern Territory without which, as Pat Dodson said, "our life is virtually lost".

In the wake of the "ultimate party", no leading Australian politician has yet summoned the courage and wit to explain adequately to the majority that Aborigines are not seeking unmerited privileges, merely basic human rights and justice; that support for land rights ought not to be the product of guilt, rather of an understanding that Australian society is debased by what has happened; and until we white Australians give back to black Australians their nationhood, we can never claim our own. ●

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Resolute in Crimplene

MAMA SAID THERE'D BE DAYS LIKE THIS
Val Wilmer
Women's Press £16.95

David Widgery

John Hopkins

Val Wilmer began writing about music as that most ignoble of creatures, the fan. From her bedroom in Streatham blazed forth missives with characteristic precosity and enterprise dedicated to the nobility of jazz. Her sheer neck worked. At an age when most of us were still plucking up courage to squirm into nightclubs, she had had Mingus back to chicken dinner, wafted into hotel bars thick with the Ellington band's suave mixture of cologne, steaks and overcoats, snapped Louis and published her first paid journalism: an interview for *Jazz News* with Little Brother Montgomery and liner notes for Memphis Slim.

She had also largely taught herself photography and, rejected by Margaret Harker at the Regent Street Poly's photography department, begun to make a precarious living doing photojournalism for *Tropic*, jazz portraits and family snaps. As she told a suspicious Moroccan immigration officer later, "*Je fais les photos pour les mariages, les bébés, les familles.*" By the great age of 21, resolute in Crimplene and lipstick, she was ready to take on New York and ended an emotionally turbulent trip taking whiskey and pictures with Langston Hughes in Harlem. Although she makes light of it, all this required fantastic determination and consummate skill as well as luck and demonstrates those great jazz fan virtues of never taking no for an answer and trusting to people's better nature.

At this time, white lovers of black music liked to hope that music could, temporarily at least, abolish racism. It's a worthy conceit, succinctly punctured for me by the patient who said to me at the height of the Rock Against Racism agitation, "But it ain't Ray Charles living next door, Doc, it's Mr Uddin and his seven kids." But Wilmer's professional and personal involvement with African student circles in London showed her the material, as well as the cultural, dimensions of racism. Behind student bravado often lay deep hurt and she recalls dingy bedsits, the smell of overcrowding, paraffin and palm oil and off-hand racial cruelties of colour-bar London.

This political dimension to her musical enthusiasm deepened as she got to know New York and America: raucous, thrilling but with desperate poverty in city and country and little respect or income for musicians revered in Europe. She arrived as black nationalism was gaining strength and on subsequent visits was clearly given a hard time by several musicians. But in the end she seems to have been trusted for her love of the music, her good intentions and, curiously, her Englishness.

As Serious as Your Life, her 1977 account of the new music, was disjointed, unanalytical but very perceptive, especially for a critic who is in some ways a classicist (her deepest love is still for Johnny Dodds, the Ellington Band and Billie Holiday). And it gave clearcut political and aesthetic support to Coleman, Dolphy and Ayler at a time when many liberal critics were hostile and

Val Wilmer with jazz musicians: trombonist Vic Dickenson (left) and singer Big Joe Turner (1965)

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outraged. The key here is not just political but depends on her unsectarian ear, her belief that all black musics eat at the same cookpot and her recognition that the moderns were rediscovering the drum as lead and solo instrument. This last insight is surely tempered by her long relationship with the outstanding Ghanaian percussionist, whom she calls Stevie Tagoe.

From North America she inevitably had to travel on to Africa, first Gambia and Nigeria, then Morocco, in search of music, performance and work. Here she writes with more delicacy and sensuality than ever about being stoned in Chaouen or listening to Ed Blackwell drumming in Tangier. And this is not lardy "travel writing" but a pursuit—tart, judgmental, for a purpose—to record in words and pictures the performance of music at its best. The book becomes a catalogue of gigs you would give anything to have witnessed: Memphis Slim and Speckled Red playing the lewd dozens in Wardour Street, the Art Ensemble of Chicago effervescent in Paris exile, Baby Tate playing unaccompanied country blues one endless South Carolina night and concertina virtuosi improvising in front of a peat fire in County Clare.

She has an uncommonly sharp as well as open ear, noting the clarinet tunings of a Turkish wedding band and the African echoes in the whoops and hollers of an inebriate on the A train. She's nicely catty about the dickhead element: rip-off editors, photo studios doing porn on the side and pissed industrial correspondents. And dear old Mick Jagger, just as one remembers him, wearing "a Marks & Spencer's grey crewneck and a permanently worried expression".

All this, if it stood alone, would constitute a rich musical memoir for a writer twice her age. But she also winds into the story her own south London girlhood in a strange world of Pye wirelesses, the Stargazers "on-the-AIR", flashers and the Cubs, her discovery of her own sexuality in front of the Gateways jukebox and the collisions of the women's movement and insurgent trade unionism. It is no mere musical portrait but an account of the London left in the era of the -isms. As always Wilmer is barging, arguing and inquiring: catching up on her theory while teaching her better educated sisters to dance. She is belligerent but able to laugh at her bellicosity, insatiable and idiotically unafraid.

The book begins and ends with a subtle portrait of her remarkable mother, Sybil, a paragon of decency and warmth but, eventually, a raver too. The dense object-infested world of the proletarian home is usually northern, patriarch-dominated and male-described but Wilmer's south London semi with its PGs, its jazz visitors and gravy which could make you cry becomes eventually the moral centre and the human triumph of this autobiography.

It's therefore impossible not to share her sudden sadness for a gone world, not just her now dead mother and the vanished smells and colours of her larder but much else: town hall dances, the Academy cinema and the Flamingo, Morocco before the hippies, sex before Aids, jazz before it advertised cashcards, dough with suet from the butcher and times when "all pianists sounded like Wynton Kelly and Bill Evans just for a minute".

She's right that in today's vile climate "the approach is unashamedly consumerist. People dip into a grab-bag of international 'goodies' to come up with an Alice Walker, a Sunny Ade or a plate of jollof rice, and if they're lucky they may find out something of what it all means". But in Wilmer's quick, ingenious and piercing spirit there is an English nonconformity and aestheticism which even the present gross conforming stupidity cannot douse.

Pursuing Bernard Shaw

BERNARD SHAW: THE PURSUIT OF POWER, 1898-1918
Michael Holroyd
Chatto & Windus £18

Sean French

During the first 100 pages of this volume (the second of a trilogy), Shaw's pursuit of power and fame resembles nothing so much as Achilles' pursuit of the tortoise in Zeno's paradox. We all know, just as Shaw's friends knew, that he is certain to become successful but the success seems endlessly deferred.

This volume begins in the middle of 1898 in the days after Shaw's marriage. Shaw was 43 and one of the most celebrated polemicists of his age. He had already written *Mrs Warren's Profession*, *Candida*, *Arms and the Man* and *The Devil's Disciple*, but none had succeeded on stage.

Shaw must have been one of the most self-confident men who ever lived, and he needed to be. *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* and *Man and Superman* followed, but he simply couldn't get them performed. By 1903 he had written 12 plays but was "almost wholly unknown to British audiences". He was 48 years old and living off his wife's money.

His success was achieved in oddly indirect fashion. A young Austrian writer, Siegfried Trebitsch, appointed himself Shaw's German translator. Shaw tried to fight him but failed and within a couple of years the indefatigable Trebitsch had not only translated the plays but had five of them performed in major productions in Vienna. Holroyd quotes Thomas Mann's statement that Shaw's "fame actually reached England only by way of Germany".

It took another disciple to get Shaw on to the British stage. The brilliant young director and playwright, Harley Granville Barker, became like a son to Shaw. In 1904 he acquired a permanent theatrical base at the Royal Court and used it virtually as a weapon, to bludgeon the British public into accepting Shaw as a dramatist. The breakthrough came with Shaw's sardonic view of the Irish problem, *John Bull's Other Island*. Beatrice Webb brought the prime minister, Arthur Balfour, to one performance. At a later performance, King Edward VII laughed so much he broke his chair. In Michael Holroyd's words, "Except for a period during the first world war, Shaw never fully recovered."

From that point this biography necessarily alters. The first volume was a remarkable exhumation of Shaw's painstakingly disguised family and private life, his philandering and his political activism. After his success, most of his crucial relationships seemed to exist in public. He fell in and then out with H G Wells at executive meetings of the Fabian Society, was observed being sculpted by Rodin by Rodin's beady-eyed secretary, Rilke. August Strindberg mounted a special private performance of *Miss Julie* for Shaw in Stockholm, calling his leading actors back from holiday to perform it. Shaw corresponded about God with Tolstoy and debated politics with G K Chesterton.

Through it all he wrote at a scarcely believable rate. As he put it in one letter, on top of "a thousand other things, I am working like mad 16 hours a day. Such is life—*my* life." With remarkable dexterity, Holroyd keeps track of the disparate activities and only occasionally does the inevitable compression become baffling. He talks of Arthur Conan Doyle being "converted by him (Shaw liked to claim) from Christmas-card Pacifism to rampant Jingoism," without explaining why Shaw liked to claim this.

Holroyd is particularly good on the torments of Shaw's fame. A side of him wanted to be loved, like G K Chesterton, or lusted after, like H G Wells. Even worse, he had become a form of stage Irishman whose revolutionary diatribes were now enjoyed or blandly tolerated by those they were aimed at.

Shaw became a celebrity but he was never corrupted by the role. During world war one he wrote a pamphlet, "Common Sense about the War", which appeared as a special number of the *New Statesman* (of which Shaw was one of the principal founders). Shaw put the objections against the war that are now commonplace. The result was a storm of abuse from friends and strangers, from every part of society. Other people might have cracked or recanted, but Shaw stood firm.

In his plays and in his virtually (perhaps totally) sexless marriage, Shaw seemed to have cut himself off from the sexual impulse. But Holroyd's account of Shaw's unsuccessful affair with Mrs Patrick Campbell (the first Eliza Dolittle) demonstrates that Shaw's sexuality had been suppressed, not extinguished. At the affair's end he wrote to her in what, for Shaw, is a Strindbergian howl of pain. Of his 57 years, he observed, "I have suffered 20 and worked 37. Then I had a moment's happiness: I almost condescended to romance."

I have some reservations about this biography, particularly concerning Holroyd's unfortunate mimicking of his subject's style. But it's a fascinating read, and Holroyd's achievement in getting through to the man beneath the public puppet is outstanding.

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Best dream of the west?

SOCIALISM: PAST AND FUTURE
Michael Harrington
Arcade £12.95

Anthony Wright

What is American socialism? When faced with this question, many of us have had two answers. The first is that it has been a contradiction in terms, an idea without a constituency, a cultural non-starter, a standing exception to the western mainstream. Our second answer has been Michael Harrington, who died earlier this summer.

For a quarter of a century, ever since his *The Other America* (1962) helped stoke the liberal fires that fuelled the anti-poverty programmes of the Kennedy-Johnson years, Harrington has been the most consistently impressive voice of American democratic socialism. He combined a string of books with a lifetime of active campaigning on behalf of the other America.

Yet to describe Michael Harrington as the exemplar of American socialism is nevertheless to understate his achievement and stature. For he has also been a major international figure of the democratic left, fusing the particular—and privileged—perspective of a close observer of the capitalist heartland and its transnational arteries with a rich understanding of socialist ideas and movements in Europe, and beyond. What might have been a disability (a socialist in America) turned out to be a source of exceptional international and intellectual strength.

Nowhere is this more evident than here, in his last book, begun the day he was told he had inoperable cancer and published as he died. He wants to know if it has all been worth it. Does socialism still have a future or will it just be remembered as "the best dream the west ever had"? The openness of the question produces a brave and bracing book. No *apologia pro vita sua* on socialism's behalf (though its contribution to human welfare is rightly asserted), but a vigorous inquiry into socialist prospects in the world as it is becoming.

If the final verdict is reasonably cheerful, this is only after a lot of socialist deadwood has been cleared out of the way. Rhetorical, history-knowing, pseudo-scientific, class-warring, centralising, economistic, problem-dodging socialism is finished, and should be. There is a future, at least a possible future, for a socialism that manages to be ethical and empirical, decentralist and global, a broad human movement with nothing less than civilisation as its frame of reference.

The failures of socialism have been much less failures of principle, as in the familiar litany of betrayal, but failures of intellect and imagination. When it came to the crunch, too often democratic socialists did not know what to do. It's time they started boxing clever (like the Swedes) on a whole range of fronts. This means getting away from the simple dichotomy of capitalism or socialism, of market or state, and exploring the many inventive possibilities of the middle ground where an actual future will be made. The correct socialist perspective is epochal, not apocalyptic, and this means short-term progress (by winning elections and forming governments) in pursuit of long-term goals.

Such a summary account does not do justice to the range and force of Harrington's argument. It is underpinned with fact and evidence. He makes Marx lie down with Keynes, Gramsci with Tawney, Marcuse with Crosland, in a heady orgy of ecumenism. Socialism is diverse, the future is open, but with a new socialism as a plausible possibility.

At the fag-end of Thatcherism, we even begin to feel the new possibilities. The crisis of Keynesian social democracy in the 1970s was just that, a particular crisis, not the end of a tradition. It opened the way for the free marketeers and the results are all around us. New Right ideology is falling apart under the weight of its own practice. You don't have to be a socialist to see that the market has made the planet the way it is and has made a mighty mess of it.

The question is not whether humanity is being globalised and socialised, but on what basis it should take place. The democratic advance in eastern Europe both opens up possibilities of dialogue with democratic socialists in the west and threatens to deprive the European right of what has long been its best and crudest anti-socialist card. Watch out Maggie, there's a Gorby about. So it's time we stopped debating whether socialism is dead or just resting and started recognising that the west may well be on the brink of a new move to the left. If we want to get our bearings, and to get some sense of what a new socialism for our times might look like, then Michael Harrington's "visionary gradualism" could scarcely be bettered. The tragedy is that this most distinguished of visionary gradualists is no longer with us.

More than just making do

ALL YOU NEED
Elaine Feinstein
Hutchinson £16.95
FLUDD
Hilary Mantel
Viking £11.95

Nicci Gerrard

In the interior, dreamy worlds of Elaine Feinstein's previous fiction, the nostalgia of remembered grief floods the present. One of her novels is called *The Survivors* and its title describes most of Feinstein's characters, who (often because they are Jewish, eastern European, and have lived through the horrors of world war two) have been violated by the past. *All You Need*'s characters are survivors of a very different kind. They are not looking back over their shoulders, but assessing the present and near future. Elaine Feinstein's latest novel, set in the late eighties of dilapidated inner city London, is more contemporary than any of her others; it lacks their plangency and tangy pain, and is instead shrewd and decisive.

Indeed, being decisive and resourceful is part of the novel's subject. Since leaving university, Nell has lived a sheltered life in one of East Anglia's gentle towns. When her husband Brian is sent to gaol in mysterious circumstances, she has to uproot herself and her resentful adolescent daughter and go to London. To the surprise of herself and her friends, she discovers she is brighter, more attractive and more dissatisfied than she had ever allowed herself to realise. She mixes with and is a match for TV programme makers, feminist groups and poets. In her middle-age, Nell suddenly "wants more than just making do".

All You Need is busy with dialogue and firm with precise event and location, like the storm of autumn 1987 that uprooted trees all over England, or the Stock Exchange crash. Nell moves from publishers' parties (where Malcolm Bradbury and Angela Carter drink red plonk) to family therapy clinics; she plays detective among the asset strippers in their Porsches and meets *Private Eye* victims. Behind the satire is an anger: London is dirty and downtrodden, full of greedy people and seedy conspiracies. There is a hidden Britain where thousands of women spend years of their lives bringing up ingrate offspring and find out, too late, that "making do" is not all you need. The novel has focus, energy and commitment. Perhaps it is churlish to miss the elegiac notes that make Elaine Feinstein's earlier works so haunting.

In contrast to *All You Need*, Hilary Mantel's fictional world of Featherhoughton pulls free from an anchorage of facts and wallows instead in a ground sticky with mad detail. Father Angwin, parish priest in the northern mill town, is beset with spiritual and quotidian perplexities. His parishioners are sub-literate and violent; his housekeeper bullies him; the brutal convent superior Mother Pepetua is his sworn enemy; the novitiate Philomena asks him unsettling questions in the confessional (does the devil wear plaid trews? Can pastry-making lead you into sin?); the ever-courteous tobacconist smells of sulphur.

Worst of all, his boisterous and offensive bishop is threatening to drag him into the ecumenical pragmatism of the 1950s. Angwin isn't sure about God anymore, but he knows that thoughts run under prayers like wires underground, and that the air is packed with discarnate spirits "like flies on a hot August day". Then Fludd arrives. Fludd is a curate sent to assist Angwin—or is he? Loving beauty and language, sowing scandal and unrest in Featherhoughton, might he not be the devil?

Fludd is a quaint and lovely novel, thick with images and angry jubilant characters who defy the authority of a finger-wagging God and his "pork-butcher" bishop and choose mystery and unholy expectations. It doesn't only believe in miracles; it believes in happy endings.

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Prudence Farmer award

A touchstone of enchantment

Carol Rumens

"All is flux", as someone remarked to me in the pub the other night, and I should begin by applauding the fact that, through its many fluctuations, including metamorphosis into the *New Statesman and Society*, this magazine has maintained its commitment to new poetry. Hugo Williams is the latest in an unusually distinguished line of poetry editors, and his wit and eclecticism are discernible in the selection under review.

The *NSS* prints fewer poems than once upon a time (or am I only imagining that there was a golden age of at least one poem, in addition to Roger Woddis, every week?) but the new policy of having a whole poetry page ensures a special thrill, like that of winning the jackpot, when one of these turns up. My only reservation is that gender segregation seems to have become part of the new look. While re-reading these poems I found myself thinking in terms of "women's pages" v "men's pages", and had to fight the impulse to interpret a competition between poems as a competition between the sexes.

It would be dishonest, though, if I didn't record that the double-page spread of women's erotic poetry back in February struck me as one of the best things ever done. Also, that I had a serious urge to include as an honorary poem Alice Walker's superb address to the Washington National March for Women's Equality and Women's Lives, "What can the white man say to the black woman?" (*NSS*, 19 May). And yes, my winning poem is by a woman. But no, this has nothing to do with my own prejudices.

I freely admit, though, to discriminating in favour of poems with some kind of emotional lift and intensity. This does not preclude playfulness and artifice. But there is an emotionally drained quality about some new English and American poetry which I find boring. I suppose its practitioners would claim to be post- or a-romantic. I've yet to be convinced that real poems can be written in this way, though, like Elizabeth Bishop's, they might employ apparent detachment as a means of engagement.

I think it was a subtext of implication that there are still feelings worth describing which pushed so many of the women's poems onto my long shortlist.

I admired especially the poems blending irony and emotional generosity: Carol Ann Duffy's "Girlfriends", for example. Fiona Pitt Kethley's "Nude"—a poem about an artist's model as seen by art-students—turned out to be a strong contender, blossoming from a typically blunt, rhythmically rather dead observation ("I have doubts about kissing men with beards", and so on) to a subtle, powerful conclusion: "Through the weeks that followed we saw her bruise/Like a plum through the weight of her body." Steff Pixner took huge, romantic risks with "Stains" and just about got away with them. And there were real toads in the imaginary gardens created by Connie Bensley and Vicki Feaver.

The men poets struck me as altogether more English. I would hate to define Englishness in any manner but the intuitive and imprecise: however, a preoccupation with the downbeat and deadbeat, offset by bright, weird flares of fantasy, seems to me one national characteristic.

There was a good line in Gavin Fletcher's "Dirge", a homely fable in which the narrator digs up his beloved's corpse, and gets sectioned as a result: "I had plumped for incineration when she went, but had been disregarded." This is surely straight out of an English suburban lounge (or lounge-bar) via, perhaps, an Alan Bennett play. The narrator in Jonathan Wonham's "Wallpaper", burning his baked beans in a rented kitchen, would have sympathised. A somewhat clichéd figure (Mr Bleaney's young nephew, surely?) he also had a jaunty, engaging quality of his own.

It would have been good to honour a work more directly politically engaged than any of these. Homing in on the winner, I hovered a while over Richard Sanger's "Colonial Incident". Finally, it seemed that the two later stanzas did not live up to the promise of the first, with its memorable image of Nairobi sunflowers "looking to the home-counties for direction", and a newspaper screamer "ATROCITIES ON BOTH SIDES" emerging as the British lion's roar when an expatriate wife opens a tin of Golden Syrup. The vicar's concluding remark "it's a sticky business" as his fingers "reach a compromise with the treacle tart" seemed, despite the ominous presence of the "two stray insects", an instance of an English kind of humour inappropriately cooling the emotional tone.

For political passion I would have had to stay with Alice Walker. But, as a touchstone of enchantment in the appropriate genre, Jo Shapcott's "Love Song with a Flock of Sheep" was the poem I kept returning to. This is sexual politics with a loving (?) vengeance: the narrator imagines sending her partner a gift of sheep which proceed to devour him out of house and home. It is effective on several levels but, above all, it is a skilful psychological portrait, showing how a lover's ambiguous devotions can degenerate through molly-coddling possessiveness to annihilation.

The poem is haunted by what it doesn't say—that, in the end, the sheep will snaffle up the beloved as well as his house-contents and body-hair. The domestic context of the sheep makes them both surreal and metaphorical but they are also satisfyingly present as sheep: "They will graze your legs, removing/every careworn hair with teeth/so precise and shy you'll feel only/a mist of breath and lips." Formally the poem is interesting, aleatoric but touched with rhyme and repetition that give it humour and emotional lift, especially in the last stanza. "I know when I arrive, dressed as Bo Peep,/ I won't get a look in. But by hook or by crook/you shall have them any way: sheep fleecy, sheep shorn/and me, lovelorn."

The poem begins with a competition on the label of a malt-whiskey bottle, the prize being a flock of sheep. Whether the poet/narrator managed to win the sheep or not, she has (forgive my Englishness) the Prudence Farmer.

Love Song with a Flock of Sheep

Jo Shapcott

"Win a flock of sheep," said the advertisement,
"Sheep Dip: an eight year old pure malt
whiskey.
You will find an entry form on every bottle."

I will. I will buy the whiskey,
I will find the entry form. I will:
I will win the sheep and I'll give them to you.

Keep the flock at home
and let them graze around the house.
Kindly and damp, they eat the carpet
and will start on the wallpaper too;
your interior decorations will be masticated
away.
The flock is softer than soft furnishings
but when they've eaten all that they'll start
on the hard stuff. Everything—your books,
your manuscripts—will fly into their placid
mouths
and they'll munch their way through the
mantelpiece.

I know you. You'll like it better without
all that ruminated stuff. You want
the woolly life, carding and spinning,
with only sheep for furniture and bedclothes.
The flock will find you out eventually
and start blowing in your ears
and their nuzzling across your hair.
It will begin in the kitchen with
a fleecy brush along the backs of your knees.
They'll surround you on the sofa
and drink out of your bath. Your clothes
will go into the three stomachs
and in the dark you'll feel sheep nibble
between your toes and suck your toenails.
They will graze your legs, removing
every careworn hair with teeth
so precise and shy you'll feel only
a mist of breath and lips.
They'll move in a cloud across your chest,
your belly, face and beard—everywhere—
down to a downy stubble, peaceful as pasture.
Soon you will be as shorn as a yearling lamb
and twice as happy, blissoming with the flock.

I know that when I arrive, dressed as Bo-Peep,
I won't get a look in. But by hook or by crook
you shall have them anyway: sheep fleecy,
sheep shorn
and me lovelorn.

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Czar of all the rushes

GOLDWYN: A BIOGRAPHY
A Scott Berg
Hamish Hamilton £16.95
AN EMPIRE OF THEIR OWN: HOW THE JEWS INVENTED HOLLYWOOD
Neal Gabler
W H Allen £14.95

Robert Carver

"He was a titan with an empty skull," Billy Wilder said of Goldwyn. Reading A Scott Berg's detailed and enjoyable account of the man and his myth I was both impressed and appalled.

Born to dire poverty in the Warsaw ghetto in 1879, Smuel Gelbfisz literally walked to America, via Hamburg, London, Birmingham and Liverpool. The Atlantic crossing, steerage, storm tossed in midwinter, was the easiest part. Entering the States illegally from Canada, penniless, knowing no one and still on foot through sub-zero snow and ice, he knelt and kissed the ground. He was in the Promised Land. After such a start, one feels, how could he not succeed on a Promethean scale?

Succeed he did, first in the glove trade, then in the movies, as one of the handful of great founding fathers, the immigrant, Jewish producer-barons. From *The Squaw Man* in 1913, directed by D W Griffiths, to *Hans Christian Andersen* starring Danny Kaye in 1952, Gelbfisz became Goldfish, then Goldwyn, inventing, producing himself along with the movies.

While respectful and admiring, Scott Berg's biography is no hagiography. The man was a monster, without doubt, and one of the profane rather than the sacred variety. Berg doesn't dwell on the egomania, the rages, spite, sharp practice and outright swindles, but they are all quietly chronicled. About halfway through this illuminating, fascinating book, I began to wake at nights, sweating, having dreamt I was deviling for the ogre under one of his notorious seven-year contracts.

Berg understands Goldwyn's own ambitious demons: the drive to make pictures of "culture" and "class", pictures with gloss, pizzaz, and moral uplift; the drive to become respectable—and make loads of dough. Above all, the determination always to run his own operation, with no partners, no stockholders. Goldwyn had to do it his way or not at all. Like Michael Winner, he believed artistic freedom was 100 people doing exactly what he told them. In the end the "Goldwyn touch" meant independence. He always made the pictures the way he wanted. "I made *Withering* (sic) *Heights*," he once snarled, "Willy Wilder only directed it." Who else would have humbled the arrogant young Olivier on set, and even given the film a happy ending despite the director's howls?

Not even the House Un-American Activities Committee and the anti-communist witchhunt fazed him. When everyone else was running scared, Goldwyn was openly defiant. The Committee never called him to testify, he was just too independent, too much of a wild card. He didn't always get it right. Some of his pictures, and some of his would-be stars, like Anna Sten, bombed, losing him millions. But he survived the Depression, the talkies, Hitler, the coming of colour, and then TV; even the heart attacks took decades to kill him. He always knew what the public liked: it liked what Sam Goldwyn liked. Mostly the public happened to agree.

Missing from this otherwise excellent book is some account of Goldwyn's feuds and finangles with the other great Hollywood producers, particularly his relationship of mutual loathing with Louis B Mayer. Certainly Mayer would have agreed with Scott Fitzgerald: "You always knew where you were with Goldwyn—nowhere."

Neal Gabler has an interesting proposition in *An Empire of Their Own*: lacking an emotional home, feeling marginal and insecure even in America, the Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe invented the safe haven of the American Dream through their lives and movies in Hollywood. A Thorstein Veblen or C Wright Mills is needed to do justice to this thesis, but Gabler is neither. Long on narrative, anecdote and chronology, his book lacks the required insight and analysis. Far too much energy is expended on the producers' lives, and far too little on the films they made and the Dream they are alleged to have created.

An American Cassandra

THE VIEW FROM THE GROUND
Martha Gellhorn
Granta Books £14.95

Kirsty Milne

As an American journalist based in Europe in the 1930s, Martha Gellhorn had seen bombs drop on Madrid and watched eager Czechs mobilise to protect their frontier. On visiting London in the summer of 1938, she was shocked to find a nation uninterested in the fate of mainland Europe and suffused by a vague imperial complacency.

Ladies were taking instruction on air-raid warnings, "feathered hats and veils bowed over notebooks". Stockbrokers in khaki exercised on City lawns. But a cheerful insularity prevailed, and the American outsider found herself playing Cassandra as she anxiously assessed the shelter potential of the London underground.

This collection of Martha Gellhorn's peacetime journalism spans six decades, complementing the fine and harrowing reports already published by Virago as *The Face of War*. In these pages she watches Adolf Eichmann being tried in Jerusalem for the murder of European Jewry; joins peaceful protests in Washington against the Vietnam war; puzzles over communist economics in Poland; and holds her breath with Spain after the death of Franco.

That one person in a lifetime could bear witness to all this gives *The View from the Ground* the burnished status of a historical document. But there's nothing here of the fossil; Martha Gelhorn's writing is spiked with intelligence, individualism and moral indignation.

She celebrates private heroism in the torture rooms of El Salvador and the muddy tents of Greenham Common. Subjects where melodrama or sentiment might lurk get direct and fearless treatment. Visiting Italian orphanages after the war, Gellhorn does not avoid the obvious poignancy of children left homeless, injured and sometimes deranged by the bombing of Italian cities. But she digs beneath the pathos to pinpoint a buried social problem: how to heal the terrible scars left by the war on the coming generation.

Very occasionally, her genuinely felt anger congeals into a righteous sarcasm and her powers of perception are directed to proving a point—nowhere more obtrusively than on a tour of Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan and the Gaza strip before the 1967 war. In championing Israel she, who elsewhere deals so forcefully in the uniqueness of suffering, seems determined to deny the Palestinians theirs. Because the Poles are cultured and rueful, they command her admiration and her sympathy; but when Palestinians complain loudly about their statelessness, Gellhorn hears only self-pity and invention—a rare blindspot in the vision of a humane and independent-minded woman.

Oxford rebel

'OUR OLIVE': THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OLIVE GIBBS
Olive Gibbs
Robert Dugdale £6.95

Stuart Weir

I was at first disappointed by Olive Gibbs's autobiography. Olive Gibbs was for more than 30 years a turbulent figure in Oxford politics: an assertive, warm-hearted, often bloody-minded woman, endlessly urging, arguing, chatting, a fag smoking in her mouth or on a saucer somewhere.

Her political story would make a rich contribution to labour history, in her own right as one of those rebels who have the courage to make their own way in a conformist party, and for its insights into the politically influential Oxford Labour Party (the birthplace, among other things, of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism which secured the postwar domination of the Atlanticist right in Labour politics).

But this is the autobiography of a bright, rebellious and often reckless working-class girl made good. Olive (as you will perhaps have guessed, a personal friend) was born in St

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Thomas's, a tough working-class neighbourhood; this is very much her-story, and I very soon warmed to it. Olive manages to avoid the sentimentality which often accompanies such tales, and she is remarkably frank about her relationship with her harsh and domineering father, Lazarus Cox, who both made and nearly destroyed her.

Olive's entry into formal politics came late, in her mid-thirties. In 1952, the Tory education authority was going to close five nursery classes which had been in existence for 50 years. A group of mothers she'd known as a girl came to ask her to put their case against the closure of the St Thomas's nursery. Olive overcame her initial fears and finally organised a powerful campaign in defence of all five classes. She saved only two; and discovered to her surprise that her new comrades in the Labour Party regarded this as a great success. For Olive, quite rightly, it was a defeat.

She soon became a councillor and was equally surprised to find herself regarded as a "dangerous left winger". The Labour group leader said to her paternally, "Once you have got rid of these silly ideals of yours, you will make a very good councillor, Olive." She gave a characteristically robust reply, stuck to her "silly" ideals, and very soon demonstrated her independence, most notably by refusing to vote for a road through Christ Church Meadows and persuading five others to do so. The road wasn't built.

Olive would have been a rebel in any walk of life or career. But my feeling is that her comparatively late entry into politics with her ideals already thought through and her strong sense of community gave her the extra strength to resist the socialising effects of labourism and the subtle pressure of the local hierarchy: not only for the good of the Oxford public, but curiously as well for a party which has far too few politicians who can talk in authentic terms to those whom they patronisingly (and inaccurately) call "our people".

Olive Gibbs is now eminently respectable, her career crowned with all manner of dignities (in which she takes a certain pleasure). I trust and hope she is still subversive enough to write a follow-up to this volume about her career in Labour politics. It will at least be one of the funnier Labour memoirs.

A Round Table story

BILLY BATHGATE
E L Doctorow
Macmillan £12.95

Boyd Tonkin

What chivalry did for the medieval epic, organised crime does for the American imagination. To writers and film-makers it grants an endless fund of knights and monsters, passions and betrayals, round tables and holy grails. E L Doctorow has already made his fortune as a mythographer of the 20th century, his chronicles too full of dragons and miracles for a sober historian to trust. *Billy Bathgate* is his Arthurian novel, hitched to the perennial American tale of a boy's growing-up into the "realm of high audacity" inhabited by men who start as demigods and end as beasts.

The street-smart, fatherless kid who calls himself Billy catches the eye of gang-leader Dutch Schultz—who did exist—in the raucous Bronx of 1935. As he recalls a brief career as the bootleg beer baron's factotum, Billy speaks a strange but addictive hybrid language. One part of it reeks of the sidewalk and the speakeasy; the other soars into a novelist's dream of vivid adolescence where the garbage-men empty trash-cans with "the tympanic carelessness of their profession". No one ever spoke like Billy. But this bardic high style whisks the reader breathless through his story, from the slow-motion drowning of a gang-member in New York harbour at the outset to the predictable but still stomach-churning shoot-out of its finale.

For Billy, crime becomes a means of grace. Intimacy with Dutch Schultz and an affair with his discarded moll, Miss Lola Miss Drew, stretches the spirit and sharpens the senses. Living in "the constant contemplation of death" transforms each dreary episode of low-grade vice into an epiphany.

As we gradually learn, the "capable boy" has chosen the wrong time and wrong boss. In 1935, with Prohibition repealed, the mob's crude racketeering looks archaic. The cops close in. Slick Sicilians supplant the Schultz gang's Jews and Irish as villainy gets classier. Like many Round Table stories, this one has an autumnal tinge. Friendships wane; promises break; illusions fade. The great days come no more.

Yet throughout his elegy, Billy knows that its object is a panicky psychopath who rules by fear in an "empty resounding adulthood booming with terror". Schultz's dumb rage explodes into murder. His apprentice, in contrast, has the gift of words and can "discern Mr Schultz's inarticulate genius and give it language, which is to say avoid its wrath".

Ever the interpreter, Billy decodes the clues in his protector's death-bed monologue and traces hidden treasure. Now, in old age, he enjoys "a certain renown": as a writer, perhaps. It is, after all, another way of turning words into dollars. The arts of speech outwit, and outlive, brute force.

As he drily admits, Billy's account "differs from what you will read if you look up the old newspaper files". Some will blame Doctorow for it, and denounce the craze for "faction". Billy, however, has a long ancestry on his side. The novel was debauched in its cot with legend and rumour. From the days of Fielding's *Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* it battened on to first-division rogues whose exploits mocked and mirrored the deeds of monarchs or heroes. Doctorow's Dutch Schultz belongs in their company. He will also rank high in American fiction's legion of false fathers, those giants of childhood who shrink to midgets in the eye of memory.

The Maya love-in

CONVERSATIONS WITH MAYA ANGELOU
Jeffrey Elliot (editor)
Virago £4.50

Yasmin Alibhai

I love Maya Angelou. All journalists love Maya Angelou (possibly because, incredibly, *she* appears to love all journalists). In fact everyone, even the headless clappers on *Wogan* love Maya Angelou. That is why this book is so irksome, because it sullies the nature of that love.

What Angelou has done for so many years is to make her doters snuggle up to her life in a great big blanket while she sings. It always feels like the words and eyes are for you and you alone and that the song is a rich deep secret you are to keep. This effect is integral to her ardent humanity as a person and a writer. Imagine the shock, then, of having that blanket snatched away to reveal a whole colony of us caught up in the same intense relationship with this wondrous person.

This collection of conversations between writers and Angelou is intended, says the editor, to "add to the portrait of this remarkable woman". In fact, it almost succeeds in doing the opposite. What it reveals is the monotonous obsessions of groupies and how unimaginative most of us journalists really are when seen as a pack.

Part of the problem is sloppy editing. In 240 pages we are told over and over again—sometimes more than 30 times—how Angelou writes in a hotel bedroom with her sherry on one side, and how she feels that white women have been rendered useless by the attitudes of white men. So you skip, and the units disintegrate into bits and pieces.

Even more serious, you begin to doubt your faith in this great person, quite unfairly. Does she, you wonder, draw only from a fountain and not a well? And are her most profound life experiences already being sold as plastic souvenirs? Her art has got to be protected from this kind of overexposure, particularly as, like the poetry of the black Amercian poet Nikki Giovanni, it stems from such acutely personal sources. A different range of selections would really have added to our sense of Angelou. She has, for example, spoken extensively about her use of the non-egotistical autobiographical form—how she uses her life to explore all life. It is a great pity we were not given one of those literary conversations.

There *are* some new insights in this book, but you have to look hard for them. The best conversation is the energetic tussle between Angelou and Rosa Guy who both piece together their lives over the years, the giants who influenced them and the friends who failed them.

But such bits do not redeem this book, which has turned this lucent, lucid, statuesque woman, who sees reality in terms of constant change—something that so quickly turns into "ashes or a dictate of opposite meaning"—into a statue frozen in time.

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Pride and Prejudice

As the "Sunday Correspondent" launches, Patricia Holland argues that the "quality" press and Murdoch are not so far apart, while Sarah Benton talks to editors Peter Cole and Peter Preston about the battle for readers

Beverley Levy

As the decade of self-interest comes to an end, the *Independent*'s astrologer has spied the dawning of a new Age of Aquarius. The *Guardian* has allowed green issues to dominate its front pages and has launched an Environment section which promises to cover "everything from deforestation in Brazil to rat infestation in Birmingham"—but began parochially with the threat to the Green Belt. The *Daily Telegraph* declared itself suspicious of "the loose thinking involved in greenery", but the *Sunday Times*, or at least its TV critic, discovered that the City has lost its sex appeal.

Style and consumerism, entertainment and politics mingle in a middle-class press which should no longer be described as *news*papers but as daily cultural events. They are directed at a readership, which is differentiated in taste and preference, including political preference, while inhabiting a narrow band of class and income.

In the early years of this century journalism faced a dilemma: was the press a branch of politics or a branch of commerce? Today the question need hardly be asked. Of course, decisions must be taken, or at the very least justified, on commercial and not political grounds. This is not, heaven forbid, for ideological reasons, but because of the irresistible demands of the advertising base and the findings of ever more refined market research.

It was these modern astrologers of the market who enabled the *Independent* to target itself accurately and are now predicting a similar success for the *Sunday Correspondent*. In response, the "quality" papers, daily and Sunday, are shifting and heaving like living organisms, chasing the weekend whims of the AB readers advertisers want.

The *Guardian*'s new Weekend section gathers together arts, travel, listings and books in a stodgy-looking magazine, clearly aimed at filling the gap between Saturday and Monday. The *Independent*, after producing a much-acclaimed "dummy", is now recruiting staff for the launch of its own Sunday title in January. Rumour has it that Neal Ascherson may be on his way to City Road just as the *Observer* seeks to revive its failing fortunes with an unremarkable face-lift and a new diarist (not Francis Wheen, who turned their offer down out of distaste for the Lonrho connection). It's shrunk back to two sections and a magazine because the long-serving editor, Donald Trelford, is worried about the guilt complex created by too much to read. The *Sunday Times* doesn't give a damn about guilt and aims to absorb all Sunday reading, scorning competitors old and new.

The *Sunday Correspondent* plans a quality paper aimed at a similar readership to that of the *Independent*: young ABs, between 20 and 45. Readership surveys show that they reject the right-wing stance of the *Sunday Times*, but want their news "unaligned". "Young people are not ideological," says David Lipsey, joint founder and deputy editor.

The founding group of the *Sunday Correspondent*, as it happens, is largely made up of Labour Party intellectuals. David Lipsey says that this is an accident of acquaintance and not relevant to the politics of the paper. Market requirements and journalistic values seem to run together, since the targeted readers, although prosperous, are seen as politically flexible. So the the *Correspondent* describes itself as "passionate but not partisan". It lays out its priorities, Europe, the environment and "the quality of life in all its aspects, health as well as wealth", but it denies itself a political project.

But whatever the market-seers predict, the gut feeling in journalistic circles is that the *Correspondent* will fail. This feeling is based in part on the almost superstitious awe with which the *Independent* is regarded (it's a good paper, but not *that* good); and partly on disappointment with the *Correspondent*'s trial run.

Over the century, the need to keep both politics and commerce at arm's length has been partly achieved by the development of journalism as a profession, with its own codes of practice and, in particular, the commitment to "objectivity" and the separation of fact from comment. In place of political involvement, journalistic independence came to command its own passion. These were the values of the liberal press that the journalists who set up the *Independent* took some risks to restore after Murdoch's blatant pursuit of commerce and willingness to place the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* at the service of right-wing politics.

The *Independent* succeeded in raising the standard of the "quality" press, taking over the *Times*'s role as the newspaper of record, as well as much of the campaigning radicalism that disappointed readers have missed from the *Guardian*. The decision to mark 20 years of British troops in Northern Ireland with a full page given over to the consequences of plastic bullets fired by the military in the province was an example of its readiness to face politically uncomfortable issues rather than follow the preference of its readership.

Because of the nature of that readership, its free-market politics, the politics which denies politics, must be tempered by the social and

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cultural concerns which have come out of the 1980s—health, education, food and the whole range of environmental issues linked to an increasing critique of business.

But Andreas Whittam Smith, its founder and editor, remains convinced that his readers do not want to be lectured at. In other words that they find explanations based on left-wing politics unacceptable. And the editor of the *Guardian* shares his view. Earlier this year Peter Preston circulated a memo to his staff, later reported in the *Journalist*, the magazine of the National Union of Journalists. It quoted market research which indicated that readers are drifting away because they "don't want automatically to be told every five minutes how awful the government is...I can't go through the paper every day striking out sentences likely to repel floaters..."

Paradoxically, trust in the market puts the *Independent* very close to the views of Rupert Murdoch himself. His speech at the Edinburgh TV festival, attacking the traditionalism and élitism of British television, received an uneasy response from papers which are in competition with his own, which hate his methods and yet which share many of his values. Like Murdoch, the *Independent* wants to break free from old-fashioned class allegiances and "nostalgic obsessions", but it is not prepared to give up its commitment to the journalistic quality on which it has based its success.

But what Murdoch has forcefully demonstrated is that "quality" is by no means natural. The British "quality" press is a genre, a cultural product in which news reporting and comment are placed in juxtaposition with the reviews, travel, business, sport and the rest according to conventions recognised by their readers.

There are certain generic rules. The need to make a cool judgment, not accepting surface appearances. The ability to interpret, keeping the balance between the detachment necessary for objectivity and the involvement necessary to gain information. Reports from David Beresford (*Guardian*) in Southern Africa, and from David McKitterick (*Independent*) in Northern Ireland, are heavy with words like "assessment", "judgment", "confirmation". Rejecting the irrational and emotional character of the "popular" press, the quality "genre" stands as its own guarantor of objectivity.

But passionate independence poses problems for the left. It depends on a division between mass-circulation papers and a "serious" press which cannot reach beyond its AB readership. It does indeed depend on an élite group of journalists who protect their professional standards. Rupert Murdoch rejects élitism and class in the name of a plurality controlled by the market alone. A more democratic plurality would make space for perspectives outside the charmed circle of the educated middle class.

The dreadful *News on Sunday* at least raised the question: what would an intelligent popular paper of the left be like? At a time when many journalists are to the left of the papers they work on, the gap in the market which it identified is still unfilled. But the "quality" papers which are not of the right—or rather their market research advisers and potential advertisers— are not ready to take up the challenge.

What do you want from a newspaper?

Mary Kenny (Writer): *"A consistent moral stand against our pornographic values and a sense of humour."*

Julie Burchill (Writer): *"No Roy Hattersley nattering, no Benny Green remembering, no Bernard Levin bum-sucking, no women columnists writing about how their washing machine broke down, and no front pages which feel obliged to have a small, frivolous item at the bottom. I think a front page should be all serious."*

David Steel (MP): *"You should be able to find your way around it."*

Peter Tatchell (Writer): *"A radical cutting edge which covers unorthodox issues and dissenting ideas; in-depth and investigative reportage and open access platform pieces which express a diverse and challenging range of opinions. For example, there is a whole heterosexual Aids exposure going on but you can't find anybody covering it."*

Kelvin Mackenzie (Editor of the *Sun*): *"Information, excitement, entertainment."*

Claire Tomalin (Writer): *"I would be happy to have books pages that are full of reviews, rather than interviews—the first are difficult, the second easy—and a good deal more coverage of science made comprehensible for victims of the divided culture like myself. I don't care at all about colour printing. High fashion's day is surely over, isn't it? And I want to know nothing about the rooms famous people live in or the way they say they spend the day."*

Fay Weldon (Author): *"An appetite for truth."*

Max Hastings (Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*): *"To tell the truth and entertain."*

Andrew Neil (Editor of the *Sunday Times*): *"Reliability and good writing are more important than anything else."*

Rodney Bickerstaffe [NUPE]: *"In industrial relations as well as the economy as a whole—analytical coverage. A chance for a voice for the poor and the powerless. Balanced editorials—so many leader writers are young men straight out of university who have got no experience of life and even less of journalism."*

Bill Roache (Ken Barlow from *Coronation Street*): *"Unbiased, factual reporting but presented in an entertaining way. I get very bored if I see bias or deliberate distortion in a newspaper, particularly on political issues, and I also like to be entertained."*

Pam St Clement (Pat Butcher from *EastEnders*): *"The truth!"*

"Our readers have better things to do than make a phone call at 70 mph"

Peter Cole

"If you're starting a new paper now you have to be aware that the last ten years have happened," says Peter Cole, unexceptionally, editor of the *Sunday Correspondent*, itself a product of lessons learned this decade. As Cole puts it: "There's a mood abroad which doesn't want to be hectored and lectured to" and "that papers which are not proprietorially dominated are more likely to give readers information straight".

There is only one flaw, explored to the full by *News on Sunday*: how do decisions get made? According to Charles Wintour, in *The Rise and Fall of Fleet Street*, a member of the *Independent*—hesitating over whether they should launch a Sunday edition—said: "If we had a proprietor, he would have said 'Let's go' months ago."

Now, of course, the dithering is over; the *Independent* will produce a Sunday edition from next January. The *Correspondent* team acknowledges that the decision to launch the *Sunday Independent* can do real damage to its plans.

The *Independent* too, will exploit one of the *Correspondent*'s main selling points: its independence from a proprietor. And both will aim for a "quality" market which wants a more tastefully concise Sunday paper instead of the vulgar splurge of the *Sunday Times*.

Until last November, Peter Cole was deputy editor of the *Guardian*; and like his old boss Peter Preston, he thinks British public life has entered a new phase. For Cole, the political debate is no longer about the Labour Party, but about "the competition for power". Much more "gritty" (his favourite adjective).

The danger is that the *Correspondent* will join the old circle of major parties and newspapers, just closing up again with a sigh of relief, with the left-centre parties banished beyond the fringe. Cole seems to confirm it when he criticises the *Observer*'s treatment of the environment as "fringe" politics while for his paper, the environment "has put a suit on".

Yet he believes that "politics in Britain starts at the grassroots, pressure-group level" and that it's the interface between movements and professional politics that's interesting—although he won't commit himself to *which* movements will get coverage.

What else? Cole dismisses the "new times" trumpeted by the *Sunday Times*, as *passé*—mid-1980s "loadsamoney" brashness. Which is fine, he says, "if you like satellite TV and making phone calls at 70mph." *Sunday Correspondent* readers will have better things to do.

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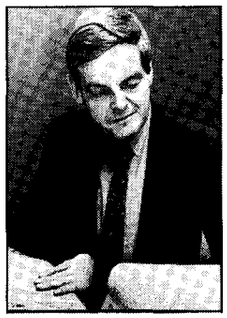
"People want to make up their own minds issue by issue"
Peter Preston

The editor of one of Britain's world-class newspapers seems a self-effacing man. The *Guardian*'s Peter Preston volunteered this description of himself and the paper he has run for the last 14 years: "You're not there in a sense to *lead* society; you're there to produce an outlet for a whole variety of opinions and reportage and trends and news."

Over the past two years, as thousands of readers have deserted to the *Independent*, his staff have been heard to mutter that the paper is rudderless, the editor too reclusive, too anxious to abdicate the *Guardian*'s natural role as a leader of left-centre opinion.

Preston acknowledges the criticism. He interprets the paper's role "more benignly". What I refer to as the "political crisis" of the centre-left in the early 1980s, a crisis which propelled some strong men into euphoria and others into nervous breakdown, he describes as "the debate". And "we were the place it happened."

Which is true. The *Guardian* skilfully negotiated the political and journalistic shake-up of 1979-82 to emerge as the dominant voice of both Labour and the Alliance. Only five years earlier it was struggling to shake off its restricted image as a northern paper.



But now the debate about the centre-left has, for the time being, abated (though Preston is scornful of any "pundit's" ability to predict, even six weeks ahead, the direction of politics). Where does that leave the *Guardian*? Is it, and reader, trapped by its self-image as a club of caring, educated, Labour-voting people who believe they *are* the debate?

"All of these things are to an extent true," says Preston. The "great ferment" of debate stalled, politicians who had responded lost their nerve and nothing happened. Which brings him to the "watershed" of 1987. Politics has become "interesting" again—the Tories now face serious competition, and there is a new, voracious appetite for European news. People don't want an "overfull diet" of Westminster politics, nor news which appears particularly "twisted". This led to stern memos to staff about intros which took for granted the "Us" of the *Guardian*. "There is less political commitment in terms of party activists and more people who want to make up their own minds, issue by issue."

Hence the *Weekend Saturday Guardian*: born, in part, of market research confirming the changed habits of the middle classes, but shaped by, says Preston, an "ancient" *Guardian* tradition: "jolly interesting and as well written as possible". The problem is that while great writers make a great read, it's politics which make "the debate".

Art

Private number

Amanda Sebestyen on Gauguin, Pollock and the market

I can't be the only person who missed the small print under **Gauguin and the school of Pont-Aven**. Remembering the excitement of a Tate show with the same title back in 1966, where the emerging Gauguin seemed to crest a vivid wave of rediscovered artists working around him in Brittany, I was taken aback to find myself confronted with a small private collection of prints.

The Royal Academy has added a last minute sprinkle of seven paintings to this travelling show. Less than a quarter of the work is by Gauguin himself, and the insulated bank-vault environment with its dimmed preservative spotlights disastrously cuts down Gauguin's unique spectrum of colour.

Gauguin used to say that "grey does not exist", but roaming through this electric gloaming you have to strain your eyes to see the green on the snow in *Christmas Night*, or the dust-pink thatch and opal stones and hedges around *The Breton Shepherdess*.

By keeping to two or three related colours (though varying the shades with tiny parallel strokes) and making each separate patch stand out in two dimensions, Gauguin's pictures pointed towards abstract art. He called the method he was evolving Synthetism—a blending of all other art languages—but he was not its only inventor.

Emile Bernard claimed until his death in 1941 that Gauguin had hijacked his ideas. Twenty years younger than Gauguin, Bernard was a friend of Toulouse Lautrec and already interested in poster art and different methods of reproduction. He had developed a style of separate colour panels inspired by stained glass. Gauguin, starting late after careers as sailor,

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Gauguin's most frightening scene "Human Misery", left, read as "a picture of sexual transgression and punishment". "Women Making Haystacks" by Emile Bernard, above. Bernard claimed that Gauguin had stolen his ideas

stockbroker and collector, was launching himself into a manic exploration of new media with earning possibilities.

Bernard has gone down as Gauguin's follower and disciple, just like the boneless imitator Arman Seguin, whose etchings take us on a long walk from sub-Gauguin and sub-Japanese through sub-Munch and sub-Art Nouveau. But the hand-coloured "zincograph" prints by Bernard give bright evidence of an originality he later tamed into Catholic sweetness.

There's the eccentric over-the-shoulders perspective of *Women in a Ferryboat*, and the monumental dark purple *Harvester* facing directly forwards to emphasise the breadth of her shoulders and the baldness of her head.

Modernism is here already with its primitivising vision interchanging the peasant, the female, the non-European, the animal and the object. The woman bent over her square primrose-and-peach pig is seen as a quadruped,

Feminists and black artists have had to fight Gaugin's romantic notions of the outcast

the two sets of udders aligned. Little girls' profiles parallel goslings' beaks, Bretonnes line up in a frieze with their own cows—it's a nursery rhyme paradise but also a menagerie.

All of these painters came to Pont-Aven believing it was primitive, even though it was an established artists' colony and the countercultural tourists quickly decided it had become "a crowd of tarts, doubtful barons and fake artists".

Gauguin might appear to be the most imperialist of artists, using a rebel rhetoric to exploit even more than the average colonist. But it's no coincidence that echoes of Gauguin are found in so many black artists' work. With his "mixed blood", revolutionary ancestry and horrendous personal life, Gauguin had no safe home to go back to. The grotesque faces in these prints—from Martinique to Provence—clearly included his own features. The most frightening scene, *Human Misery*, has been taken as a picture of sexual transgression and punishment. I prefer to wonder if the two shadowed and powerless children might be enduring a bitter family desertion.

Feminists and black artists have had to fight Gauguin's Romantic notion of the outcast, licensed by genius to plunder the world. But even that myth is surely better than the ethic of today, when all the public galleries are becoming extensions of the private or corporate patron and their egos. (No less than three frantic letters in my press pack implored me: "It is essential for the Royal Academy that all reviews of the exhibition acknowledge the participation of the Banque Indosuez").

With a vacuum where funding used to be, private galleries are taking on the status of public viewing spaces but without either the resources or the standards. Take the publicity surrounding the 23 pictures by **Jackson Pollock** at the Anthony d'Offay gallery. Most of them date from Pollock's questing early years and might be by almost anybody. Only one (restricted by its size) struck me as the real splattering, spattering thing. These paintings are, quite probably and simply, all of his work that's available *for sale* to the world at the present time.

"Gauguin and the School of Pont-Aven: Prints and Paintings" at the Royal Academy until 19 November; "Jackson Pollock 1934-1952" at Anthony d'Offay, 9 Dering Street, London W1 until 24 October.

Music

The enemy outside

Marek Kohn examines the art of paranoia

Noise is inherently authoritarian. That's the way it can seem at rap concerts, at any rate. It's not the preposterous bombast of heavy metal, or the libidinal excess of the bass in reggae. This is merciless, undifferentiated noise; an uncompromising statement of power. On top of it is the ritual of command and response which, by the nature of the genre, is more prominent in rap than in other forms of contemporary popular music.

Public Enemy make this theatre of power an explicitly political one. "We're out for one thing only, and that's to bring back the resurgence of black power," the group's frontman, Chuck D, told *New Musical Express* two years ago. "We're out for the preservation and the building of the young black mind: trying to make people aware, makin' 'em educate themselves. We represent the young black male in America."

For Public Enemy, "preservation" demands a survivalist posture: paranoid, poised, and armed. On stage, they are flanked by guards in paramilitary uniform, who execute drill steps and a sort of dance routine with the sub-machine-guns they carry. These are members of the Security Of The First World (SIW) posse, said to number 150 in all. Followers of Louis Farrakhan's Nation Of Islam, they are linked to Public Enemy through Professor Griff, the group's "Minister of Information". In another *NME* interview, Griff noted that "we're onstage with the band in order to project images of strength and order".

The other half of the equation is the construction of the enemy outside. Public Enemy routinely start by claiming that racist elements didn't want the show to go ahead tonight: in the Southern States, these are the Klan; in Britain, Public Enemy allude to our own home-grown fascists. Last time the group played in London, at the Electric Ballroom, it had been preceded by bad press. The media duly came in for repeated denunciation.

This is where Griff comes in. He gives a setpiece speech: the bit that got them all talking after the Electric Ballroom show was his description of black babies being ripped from their mother's bellies by whites. He also develops the theme of conspiracy, linking two demons by claiming thay South Africa is a linchpin of the international drugs trade. And then there's that perennial bogey of which conspiracy theorists never tire, the Trilateral Commission.

The crisis into which Public Enemy have now been pitched was, perhaps, inevitable. After all, how could a professor of paranoia leave out the

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Jews? His views surfaced in the *Washington Times* in May. Jews, he told the paper, were responsible for "the majority of wickedness that goes on across the globe", "have a grip on America", and "have a history of killing black men". He went on to express his admiration for Gaddafi, Khomeini, and Idi Amin.

The resulting furore plunged the Public Enemy camp into turmoil. Eventually, after several weeks, CBS Records was able to issue a statement from Chuck D denying that the group was anti-semitic, and denouncing racism. He apologised for the offence that had been caused; Griff was stripped of his stage role and his position as head of security. CBS applauded Public Enemy's action.

The delay, however, suggested reluctance. This was confirmed when Chuck D subsequently announced that Public Enemy were splitting up as a result of pressure from CBS and Rush, the group's management company. "It's our way of boycotting the music industry," he explained.

The hiatus was brief. Not only did the group re-form, but they recently reinstated Griff. Soon afterwards it was reported that a sniper, supposedly from the Jewish Defence League, had trained a rifle on a member of the group outside the Rush offices in Manhattan. Rush, however, denies the story.

Amid the evasion, confusion and disinformation that has characterised the whole saga, all that can definitely be concluded from the latest story is that certain elements surrounding the group are happy to milk anti-semitism for publicity. In the words of Public Enemy's anti-media anthem, "Don't Believe the Hype".

Television

A world without opposition

James Cusick reports on Labour-free TV-am

The setting is Granada Television, and the recording of one of its beloved "hypotheticals". The cameras zoom in on the Harvard law professor as he spins on his heels to address a panel of media moguls—plenty of John Dykes and Greg Birts.

"Gentlemen," the professor begins, "you're the editor of that prestigious morning television programme, *Newsday*, and another major political story has just broken. You gather in the studio a panel of politicians to comment on the implications of what's happened. But like every other occasion in almost two years, you don't have a top Labour politician to balance the story. Are you worried?"

Greg Birt says he's worried about keeping his job as editor of *Newsday*, but tries to laugh off the hypothetical scenario as too outrageous for British broadcasting. But is it?

November this year will mark the last time a member of the technicians' union, the ACTT, worked at TV-am. It will also mark the last time a senior Labour Party politician was interviewed in the studios of the breakfast channel.

Ian Irvine, TV-am's chairman, acknowledged back in January 1988 that the position regarding the absence of the Labour Party, if it continued, "could jeopardise balance". Inside TV-am, "balance" is regarded not as something professionally necessary—it's merely impossible.

Political balance on *David Frost on Sunday*—the plinth on which the station's reputation is built—is a weekly nightmare. Over the past 12 months on the *Sunday* programme, only Peter Shore and Dr John Gilbert have offered their party's perspective. Invitations to Neil Kinnock and his shadow cabinet are regularly issued and regularly rejected, leaving only David Owen and Paddy Ashdown as the studio guests for the opposition.

With the absence of Labour, TV-am has ceased to be an effective discussion forum in British television. One-sided arguments also make boring television.

If TV-am's bosses don't seem too annoyed with a missing Labour Party, then they should at least be concerned that the senior ranks of the Conservatives are also missing from a channel that claims to be "the third force in British television news". Only Mrs Thatcher, in a Christmas special from Downing Street, has been interviewed by David Frost, with invitations to every member of the changing Tory cabinet over the past 12 months meeting with a rejection.

Yet an arrangement with ITN allows TV-am to use its pictures, an arrangement which is used to the full, giving TV-am at least the occasional appearance of impartiality. Neil Kinnock, Gerald Kaufman, Roy Hattersley, Michael Meacher, John Prescott, Robin Cook, Tony Benn and Keith Vaz have all recently appeared on TV-am's news bulletins despite their party's near boycott—this courtesy of ITN. These "appearances" are regularly listed in correspondence between TV-am's editor-in-chief, Bill Ludford, and Labour's director of campaigns and communications, Peter Mandelson. The interviews taken from ITN are described as part of TV-am's "on-going policy to achieve political balance".

Maybe Peter Sissons, as he moves from ITN to his new super-post at the BBC, could help this "on-going policy" along by donating a few interviews. After all nobody would notice... certainly not the IBA.

James Cusick was acting producer on the last series of "David Frost on Sunday"

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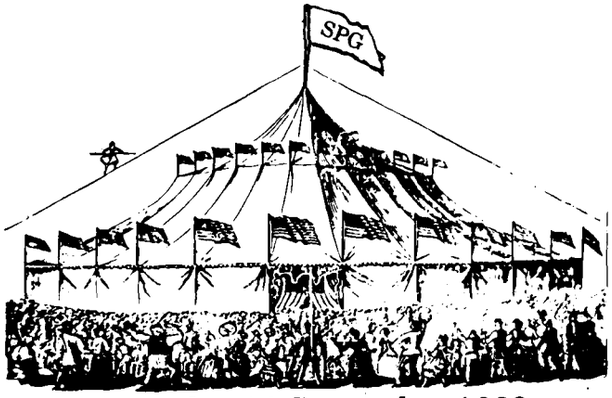

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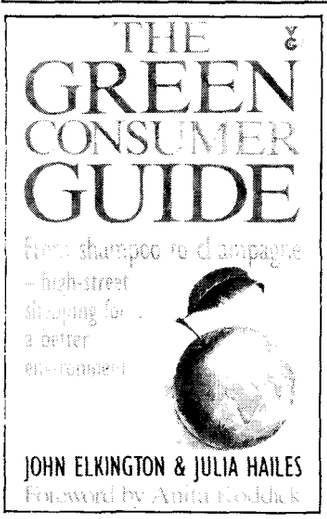

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Catherine Deneuve waiting for hubby and repelling Depardieu, but keeping her fur coat dry

Cinema

Not being there

Suzanne Moore on surface desires, voyeurism and power play

No one with any real class wears fur coats any more, only the very rich and the very naff, so it is a telling sign that Catherine Deneuve spends most of her new film—**A Strange Place to Meet**—huddled up in one. After a row with her husband, she is left in a motorway layby where she meets Gerard Depardieu, stripping his engine in order to see how it works. As he takes his car apart—a rather lame metaphor for re-examining his life—Deneuve's life falls apart before him.

She gets more unhinged by the minute (though naturally the fur coat and immaculate make-up stay put) as she insists that she must prove her love for her husband by hanging around until he fetches her. Inevitably Depardieu falls in love with her and waits for her to stop waiting. This scenario might have been more exciting had the film used more than two locations. But the tedium induced by motorway cafés infuses the whole movie, shot by François Dupeyron, making his directorial debut on a feature film, with a singular blandness.

The premise of the film rests on the partnering of the French Everyman—Depardieu—with the symbol of French Womanhood Deneuve. Unfortunately they produce less sexual chemistry than a Gold Blend advert. And although Deneuve actually *looks* more interesting the older she gets, it is hard to feel any sympathy for her character—a woman who never initiates anything and is entirely dependent on men and their reaction to her. But then Deneuve has always played roles in which, with minimal effort, she becomes simply a beautiful surface on to which men project their desires.

This special kind of blankness is known as "mystique". It must be tough being an icon, especially a female one, since the purity of the image demands the draining away of any depth or feeling. This gives Deneuve that sometimes wonderful "not quite there" quality and it's no coincidence that her most memorable performances have been as prostitutes.

Ann, the central character of Steven Soderbergh's celebrated **sex, lies and videotape**, is also a beautiful woman who, as Graham (James Spader) observes, is used to being "looked at all the time". She is the woman John Berger described: so aware of being watched that she watches herself even when alone. As the title suggests, this is a movie about the lie of appearance and the appearance of lies. It took the Palme D'or at Cannes and is certainly a stunningly assured piece of film-making. After a summer in which special effects seemed to have taken over from effective scripts it is good to see a movie whose success is largely thanks to an intelligent and funny screenplay.

Soderbergh gets away with long, close-up shots of dialogue that in other films might be deemed pretentious, precisely because *sex, lies and videotape* is so well written and, not least, because most of that dialogue centres on everyone's favourite subject—sex. Andie MacDowell is that rare phenomenon, an ex-model who can act, and she plays Ann with jittery intensity. Married to the upwardly obnoxious John, their colour-supplement life in small town Louisiana appears perfect. He is successful at work, they have a beautiful house, and she has nothing to do but clean it. In her therapy, however, she is obsessed about garbage overflowing everywhere and admits that she has never masturbated.

When Graham, an old friend of John's, comes to stay, his strangely intimate yet hesitant manner and his confession of impotency enable Ann to confide in him. "I think sex is so overrated." This is clearly not the case for her sister Cynthia who is vigorously fucking John at every available opportunity. (Actually Ann doesn't like to use the word "fucking"... though she suspects that something is going on.)

She trusts Graham but is appalled when she finds out that his only sexual pleasure comes from watching videos of women he has taped, talking about their sexual experiences. Cynthia, true to form, is desperate to know what has shocked her prudish sister so much, and when she finds out volunteers to be interviewed.

Soderbergh's use of video within the film is terrific, reminding me of Atom Egoyan's *Family Viewing*, which also uses video as a symbol of sexual alienation. Graham needs the *image* of a woman, not a real woman, to get off. The anonymity of pornography, however, is not enough, it has to be a woman he *knows*. Video guarantees both that distance and that unrealness, by turning everything into an image. Yet it is also the technology of intimacy, of home-movies, of promised recipricosity.

Voyeurism is the paradox that lives and dies on that promise. The voyeur's darkest fear is peculiarly double-sided: that the object of desire is not what it seems, in which case he loses control of the fantasy, and that the object is *exactly* what it seems, in which case total separation is hard to maintain.

With these echoes of *Peeping Tom* and its emphasis on the phallic power of the camera, *sex, lies and videotape* shows more insight into its male characters than its female ones. Laura San Giacomo, as the permanently randy little sister, is a little too close to a stereotype at times. Overall though, the film is totally compelling and all the comparisons and clamouring to classify this new talent—Woody Allen, Eric Rohmer and *thirtysomething*—seem as unnecessary as they are unsatisfactory.

The film's sexiness comes from the fact that it is not afraid to deal with its subject. Sexuality is presented as problematic for everyone concerned, and the film cleverly oscillates between sex as the essential emotional truth and sex as the biggest lie of all. John and Cynthia have great sex because they are both lying to someone else about it. In contrast, Graham and Ann are both painfully honest and painfully inadequate.

Soderbergh has said that this is a film about accountability and it is. But it is really moral, rather than sexual, responsibility that is his subject, a rather old-fashioned concept. If finally, after his witty dismissal of therapy, he falls into the trap of using sex as both revelation and cure—a true fantasy if ever there was one—at least he does it through Ann when, for the first time, she starts asserting her desire. She confronts Graham as he is taping her. Object becomes subject.

When she takes the camera from him he says nervously: "I don't find this turning the tables thing interesting." Well, I do. Because we are all voyeurs and here is a film that delivers what we are all looking for. That elusive commodity that is so often promised but rarely materialises—Adult Entertainment.

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Exhibition

Beyond style

Stephanie Williams on a vision of Britain

Judging from the portents of the past ten days, the gloves are coming off in the current debate about architecture. "My kingdom come, my will be done", ran the caption in the *Architect's Journal* beneath a photograph of the Prince of Wales pictured on the jacket of his book *A Vision of Britain, A Personal View of Architecture* (Doubleday, £16.95) last week. And in an excellent edition of the BBC's *Omnibus*, which rebutted the Prince's views, Professor Peter Carolin, professor of architecture elect at Cambridge University, politely revealed that the Prince's "monstrous carbuncle" speech *had* damaged Ahrends Burton and Koralek, the practice which had conceived the first design for the National Gallery extension. The Prince's interventions are costing people jobs.

He is also pulling some very strong punches. "The further I delve into the shadowy world of architecture, planning and property development the more I become aware of the powerful influence of various interest groups," he writes in the introduction to *A Vision of Britain*.

Of these, he says, the most deserving of vilification are architects. "I believe it *was* the architectural establishment, or a powerful group within it, which made the running in the 50s and the 60s. It was they who set the cultural agenda.

"It wasn't the local councillors, or the developers, who had read Le Corbusier and other apostles of modernism, and then persuaded reluctant architects to adopt 'progressive' ideas... It was the 'great architects' of this period who convinced everyone that the world would be safe in their hands. Their descendants still retain prestige, and a kind of glamour, among their peers: they set the style, control the curriculum, and have commanding positions in the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Fine Art Commission, and the Royal Academy. It is they who keep a tight grip on architectural education and who are the heroes of a largely sycophantic architectural press and the focus of much uncritical attention from the media in general."

These are extraordinary statements coming from our future monarch. As in every profession powerful cabals exist. True, critics and architectural magazines who have taken certain architects to task have had their knuckles rapped. But as a whole, the profession is so disorganised and divided (and has been for years) that I was amazed that anyone could credit it with a conspiracy theory.

The Prince deplores the ugliness of our contemporary built environment; he longs to create once more the beauty of our picture-postcard past. In spite of all the controversy many architects will have little trouble with the "ten principles" for designing new buildings elucidated in his book which form the centrepiece of the exhibition set up to mark its publication now on show at the V & A. New buildings should be decorated; built of natural, local materials and clearly show what they are for. New developments should fit into, not dominate, the landscape; they should be of human scale and blend harmoniously with their surroundings. The Prince calls for the creation of more squares, circuses, and gardens to lend new places a sense of enclosure and says the community should be involved in design. Various sectors of the architectural profession have been issuing edicts for at least 15 years.

Where the profession and the Prince seriously part company is over his conviction that only by harking back to the past for inspiration and building in a classical style will the quality of Britain's architecture improve. In this the Prince of Wales shows how far he has failed to grasp the enormous complexity of trying to build well in the late twentieth century.

Architecture has always represented an uneasy compromise between the application of art and vision, and the practicalities of function, site, structural capacities, availability of materials, the meeting of regulations. As Richard Rogers who, so far, is showing himself the most articulate and convincing of the Prince's opponents, cynically remarked on *Omnibus*, "the 'best' architects today are those with a sound knowledge of planning law, who can build very fast and use the cheapest materials".

In fact, apart from the viciousness of his introduction to *A Vision of Britain* there is nothing in either the book or the exhibition that we have not heard from the Prince of Wales before. Most of the text is made up of the script of the programme he recorded for *Omnibus* last autumn, and the exhibition does little more than prove by showing us copies of architectural treatises from Vitruvius, through Piranesi, from Pugin to Ruskin, that there is nothing new in building codes, or in furious architectural debate.

The fact is that you cannot dictate style and expect designers to build with conviction. Nor will a mere rearrangement of facades achieve the better-looking Britain the Prince is striving for. As the past 20 years of cleaning and restoration of historic buildings has demonstrated, many of the most unfortunate buildings cheer up when they are cleaned, painted, well managed and maintained. Blasted landscapes surrounding beleaguered tower blocks could be transformed if they were planted and gardened; urban areas would immediately improve if the tons of litter in our streets were removed. The Prince is right that we do need a revival in civic pride and the belief that quality is a good investment. But it is time for the debate the Prince has begun to go beyond the superficialities of style.

A Vision of Britain

Building by numbers: Wren's Monument nearly obscured by the Nat West Tower

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

F.L.A.T. (Facility for Living and Assessment Together) requires Community Project Assistants. The F.L.A.T. Project trains and assesses people who have learning difficulties (mental handicap) to live more independently in the commmunity. Hours: 35 p/w and a personal allowance of £154.76 p/m free accommmodation and bills, excluding personal tel. calls. Interested? Contact F.L.A.T. on 01 403 1542.

AGORAPHOBIC SUPPORT Group. The Westminster Association for Mental Health need volunteers with or without experience. Driver/ car owners are also in urgent demand. If you are interested please contact Diane on 969 2434.

THE HIGHBURY TRAINING & Counselling Centre needs a volunteer or volunteers to staff the phone and help according to ability (e.g. fundraising, admin.). Reliability and sensitivity important. Possibility for training in counselling for the right person/s. Contact HTCC on 01 226 2190 or 704 8300.

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM Council for Racial Equality seeks volunteers for welfare rights group. Gain experience of advising the public on their rights. No experience necessary - training course begins end of September. Speakers of minority languages are especially welcome. Contact Mary or Georgina: 741 5715.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING and CND needs some help! Lots of cards, wrapping paper and other goods to be sent out. Help also needed in CND shop. Please ring Laura or Mark on 250 4010. Travel & lunch expenses paid. (Nearest tube Old St.).

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL Research seeks Live-In Workers to participate in a diverse range of social issues - from community development to international conciliation and human rights work. Sense of humour, level-headedness and an aptitude for paperwork more important than experience. Full board & pocket money. Tel. 01 834 2457 or write to: Mr. R. Hauser (Director), 16 Ponsonby Plc, Pimlico, London SW1 4PT.

A UNIQUE YOUTH Training Scheme sponsored by CSV has offered training to young people nationwide in Community Care for 10 years. We are finding it difficult to provide suitable affordable accommodation. We wish to develop work placements where accommodation can be offered on the premisis. If you can help or want more details call 01 278 2071

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CAMBRIDGE. Women needed to work with incest survivors. Scope for hostel work, outreach & information work, fundraising & project work. Training provided + opportunities to develop areas of interest. Expenses paid. We are a feminist collective committed to developing an equal opportunities policy. Telephone Cambridge 314438 (24 hour ansaphone).

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It apears three times a week on Thames Television, at 6.20pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

WEEK 38 19/20/21 September 1989
We return with a new series of Thames Help and a new presenter, JACKIE SPRECKLEY. Each week we look at an issue that affects Londoners.

CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU SERIES:

PROGRAMME 1: Tuesday 19 September

September 3rd 1989 not only marks the 50th Anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2, but also the birth of the CAB movement. Stella Penley worked for the CAB from the very first day and tells us about the hard times involved in being a CAB worker in wartime, and some of the lighter more uplifting moments.

PROGRAMME 2: Wednesday 20 September

Ron Dorey damaged his back in an accident at work in 1969. Now 20 years later he is able to walk only with the use of calipers and a walking stick. Ron's local CAB at Lewisham specialises in working with the housebound and people with disabilities and have been trying to win compensation for him for over 2 years. This is just one example of the kind of work being dealt with by CABs every day.

PROGRAMME 3: Thursday 21 September

Last year it is estimated that the CAB dealt with 1.5 million cases in the South East alone. In order to cope with the massive workload they need truckloads of volunteers. We talk to a volunteer, Ben Hughes at Richmond CAB about what he gets out of volunteering and get some idea of the kind of work that passes through a CAB office every day.

If you want to become a volunteer CAB worker, phone us on the night on 01-388 8282.

For more information please contact:

Jacqui Roach, Press Officer
National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux (NACAB)
Myddleton House, 115 - 123 Pentonville Road, N1 9LZ (Tel. 01-833 2181)

THAMES TELEVISION XXI

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

PHOBIC ACTION needs mobile volunteers to befriend people with phobias/severe anxiety and assist self-recovery. East London area. Training course starts on 14.9.89. Contact Emma, Phobic Action, Greater London House, 547/551 High Road, London E.11 4PR. Tel: 558 3463.

SHEFFIELD PARENTLINE requires volunteers to train as tel. counsellors. If you are a parent yourself, and can give some time to listen to and help other parents under stress, contact: Parentline, CVS Hse, Divison St, Sheffield, or telephone Sheffield 730269 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. any weekday.

ARK (environmental movement) is looking for volunteers to help our membership department. Any time you can give in our Parsons Green or Westbourne Pk offices during office hours will be very much appreciated. Further details please call Paul Marshall on 968 6780.

LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST is looking for a "minute taker" to help relieve the pressures on the Director at meetings. Attendance at 12 evening meetings a year. Word processing skills would be useful. Write in confidence to: Jeremy Iles at London Wildlife Trust, 80 York Way, London N1 9AG.

BROMLEY AUTISTIC TRUST seeks a responsible resident Volunteer (non-smoker) to join residents and careworkers at small home near Bromley town centre for five autistic people (1 woman, 4 men, aged 28 - 37 years) attending Day Centres. Innovative now well-established project, provides good learning opportunities. Accommodation and food, plus weekly payment. Please phone (0689) 57239 for further information.

LEONARD CHESHIRE HOME for ten people with a mental handicap in S.E. Lonndon requires volunteer Care Assistants. Accommodation & expenses + allowance paid . Contact Nick Baxter/ Louise Child 01 659 8962.

WOMEN'S ORGANISATION *urgently seeks* Treasurer to oversee the finances of the organisation, liaise with accountants, Inland Revenue, etc. Women Against Sexual Harassment is a voluntary organisation which advises & supports women who are experiencing sexual harassment at work. Please contact Valerie Mainstone 01 833 0222.

ELCHANAN ELKES Assoc. for Intercommunity understanding. Volunteers are needed in Israel from the middle of October for various projects with elderly & handicapped. Some projects last 3 weeks some 2 months. Experience prefered. Phone 0533 775369 or 0533 415582.

BRENT Bereavement Project is looking for volunteers to visit recently bereaved people in their own homes and provide ongoing emotional support. Full training given. Travel expenses paid. For further information please contact Valerie Wise 459 6818.

WOMEN'S Organisation seeks volunteers to help with: organising a Conference, fund-raising, newsletter and mailings, maintaining an archive of press cuttings etc. Women Against Sexual Harassment is a voluntary organisation based in Central London which advises and supports women who are experiencing sexual harassment at work. Please contact Valerie Mainstone 01 833 0222.

PHOTOGRAPHIC Enthusiast with Cerebral Palsy needs volunteer to help set up photographic/ video courses. Telephoning, letters, administration and some physical care - toilet, preparing food. You need to be fit, flexible and a driver. Payment by commission on course fees. Hours negotiable. Contact Barry 701 8686 or Jackie 701 1391.

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Application form and information pack from:- Social Services Department, 7 Penrhyn Road, Kingston on Thames, Surrey, KT1 2DS. Tel:- 01-541 9666. (24 Hour Answerphone)

Please quote reference number 89/598/2. Closing date 29.9.89

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Labour

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Closing date: 22.9.89.

Lothian Regional Council is an equal opportunity employer and will prevent discrimination particularly on the grounds of sex, marital status, disability, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnic origin

LOTHIAN

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Haringey Health Authority has a commitment to preventing HIV/AIDS and already has several established projects. We are now looking for 3 people to extend our HIV Prevention Team to 4 to further develop our work in this area.

Senior Health Education Officer for HIV (Community)

Grade 6 – (Admin & Clerical) £12,719-£14,751 p.a. inc.

You will assist the HIV Education Co-ordinator in the identification of the training and information needs of Haringey's communities. In addition, you will be responsible in implementing a programme of action for community organisations throughout Haringey. The post holder will also explore joint initiatives with relevant agencies within Haringey.

You should have some experience of working with Community or Voluntary organisations.

Senior Health Education Officer for HIV (National Health Service)

Grade 6 – £12,719-£14,751 p.a. inc.

You will be responsible for developing HIV projects within the Health Authority. This will include the provision of training and support for Health Care Staff who are involved in HIV/AIDS prevention or in the care of people with HIV related infection.

You should have some training experience.

HIV Administrator

Grade 4 – £8,838-£10,589 p.a. inc. (dependent on experience)

You will provide administrative and secretarial support to members of the HIV Team. You should have at least 2 years administrative experience to perform a range of administrative tasks and perform to RSA qualification or equivalent standard.

For an application form, job description and candidate specification, please contact District Personnel Department on 01-808 1081 ext 10/11/12.

CLOSING DATE: 1st October 1989.

Haringey Health Authority is working towards equal opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Haringey
HEALTH AUTHORITY

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A PROJECT WORKER
(part time)

is required for the newly formed

GLOBAL EDUCATION NETWORK

The Network aims to link individuals and organisations at a regional and national level to share information on issues of global concern - peace, human rights, environment, development - in an educational context.

Based in London (Euston)
£6,500 per annum
17.5 hours per week

We need an imaginative organiser and administrator with excellent communication skills. Networking experience would be an advantage.

Write for details to; National Association of Development Education Centres, 6 Endsleigh Street, London, WC1H 0DX (Tel. 01 388 2670) enclosing an sae.

Closing date for applications: October 11th 1989

Brent Council is seeking an outstanding person with flair, vision and proven managerial ability to head its newly formed Community Services Department which will be responsible for Leisure Services, Youth and Community Services, Joint Neighbourhood Projects and Grants Administration.

Director of Community Services

£44,553 + car

Brent is the seventh largest London Borough and is the country's most multi-racial community. The Asian, African-Caribbean and Irish communities together make up half the borough's population. It is a vibrant, exciting and socially mixed borough which includes areas of severe urban deprivation.

The Community Services Department has been formed to deliver existing services effectively and to develop a range of new initiatives and partnerships with voluntary groups and with local communities with which it will have a direct involvement.

This is an exciting opportunity for someone with energy and commitment to play a leading role in improving the quality of life in Brent. The right person could come from a number of backgounds but must understand the needs of multi-racial communities and be able to demonstrate a successful track record of leadership coupled with the ability to get the most out of limited resources.

For an information pack and application form please telephone Mike Beer on 01-490 1155 between 9am and 5pm (answerphone after office hours) or, write to him at Bartlett Selection 2/3 Charterhouse Square London EC1M 6BJ. Closing date for applications 6th October 1989. Please quote reference D/CYNS

Brent THE equal opportunities employer welcomes applications from all sections of the community. Job sharers welcome.

London Borough of
BRENT

◄ ◄ **AS A MATTER OF FAX: 01 739 9307** ► ►

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AIDS CO-ORDINATOR

The ALA wishes to appoint someone to assist the association in the development of good practice and promoting co-operation between local authorities, health authorities, family practitioner committees and the voluntary sector in planning and providing HIV related prevention and support services.

The ALA is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community and from those wishing to job share.

Salary range from £16,980 to £18,327 including London Weighting.

For further information, a job description, and application form contact:

Association of London Authorities,
36 Old Queen Street,
London, SW1H 9JF.
Telephone: 01-222 7799.

Closing date for applications:
Friday, 6th October, 1989.

A·L·A

RIVERSIDE HEALTH AUTHORITY
Mental Health Unit

NURSING ASSISTANT (Grade A)
Charing Cross Hospital

Required to join the multi-disciplinary team of our acute psychiatric day hospital. This post would suit a graduate wishing to gain some clinical experience for 1 - 2 years prior to pursuing a career in one of the health professions.

The successful applicant will assist keyworkers with the planning, implementation and evaluation of care for individual clients; as well as playing an active role in the implementation of the day hospital group/activity programme. An emphasis is placed on staff training and development.

For further information/informal visit contact Nasim Fraiz (Sister) or Sarah St. George (Senior Occupational Therapist) 01-846 1507. For job description/application form contact Personnel Department, 4, Collingham Gardens, London SW5 01-846 6617.

Please quote ref no: YB/15

Closing date: 22 September 1989

If you've got urgent ad copy then fax it to us on 01 739 9307

Courses

Part-time M.A. in Historical Studies

A two-year evening degree (plus dissertation); students take a core course in The Theory and Practice of History and two from a number of options. These relate to aspects of the social and political history of Britain, America and Europe since the 16th century and include woman's history.

For an application form and prospectus please write to: The Registry, Thames Polytechnic, Wellington Street, London SE18 6PF.

The School of Humanities also welcomes applications for part-time research leading to MPhil and PhD (CNAA) degree.

THAMES Polytechnic
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INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORY OF ANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

ONE YEAR COURSE

The aim of the course is to provide an introduction to the main theories of analytical psychotherapy including those of Freud, Jung, Klein and more recent writers in Europe and America. The course will therefore offer an educational experience for anyone interested in the processes of analytical psychotherapy.

Applications are invited from those working in the helping professions and other professional groups who may find an analytical perspective valuable in their work or personal development.

The course takes place on two evenings a week and will begin in April 1990. The lectures and experiential groups will take place in central London. Each student will have a personal tutor and be member of a tutorial group.

Those interested in the above course or any other courses offered by the L.C.P. should write to the Administrator, Mr Gabriel Aitman, London Centre for Psychotherapy, 19 Fitzjohn's Avenue, London NW3 5JY.
Closing date for applications is November 15, 1989.

Conferences

BMA FRINGE MEETING at the Scottish National Party Conference

An SOS for the NHS

Thursday, September 21st 1989 at 12.45pm

GLASGOW HOTEL, KIRK STREET, DUNOON

Sandwiches and soft drinks will be available free of charge

OV SELECTION

have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers.

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EIGENWELT LONDON. Counselling, Groupwork and Psychodrama. Short Courses & Diploma Programmes in London, Midlands, Newcastle and Scotland. Contact: Cordelia Grimwood, 12 Howitt Road, London NW3 4LL. Telephone: 01-586 3254.

Booksellers

SCARCE BOOK SERVICE list wants 01-876 7254. Hammersmith Books, High Street, London SW13 9LR.

CHINA & Far East. 1,300 rare & o/p titles (history & politics). Catalogue from Oxus Books, 121 Astonville St, London SW18.

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JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA Small group - escorted tours; low cost flights, JLA, 16 Devonshire Road, London, W4 2HD. or telephone (01) 747-8315.

Agenda
Sun 17 Sept

GREAT SALE OF BOOKS, PRINTS, POSTERS. Sunday, 17th September. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Hampstead Community Centre, 78 Hampstead High Street, NW3. (Tube: Hampstead). Organised by North London 7 Days Committee.

Mon 18 Sept

THE ISAAC DEUTSCHER MEMORIAL LECTURE: Boris Kagarlitsky, co-ordinator of the Federation of Socialist Clubs in Moscow, will speak on "The Importance of Being Marxist", on 18 September, 7.30 pm at the London School of Economics, New Theatre, Houghton St. WC2.

Wed 20 Sept

"POVERTY - DOES IT EXIST?" Chris Pond (Low Pay Unit). 7.30 pm, Cole Room, 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W.1. Central London Fabian Society. All welcome.

Property File

Property to Let

ROOM WITH A VIEW in Highbury sharing kitchen and bathroom for person 30+. £160 p.c.m. exclusive of bills 01-226 2494.

Accommodation Wanted

TWO RESPONSIBLE, professional females seek accommodation at reasonable rent in the central London area. Short let or house sitting considered. Excellent references. Please call 01-870 2318 if you can help.

Employment Wanted

LOYAL, DISCREET, experienced, competent, PERSONAL MANAGER, available to work for compatible person. London-based. Box (36) 736.

BRIGHT YOUNG THING with good writing, research, current affairs esp. Third World, NGO, wp experience, seeks freelance, part-time work as researcher/ assistant. Tel: 01-704 9191.

Meetings

THEOSOPHY. Informal meetings on Hypnotism/ Psychism September every Sunday 8 - 9pm S.A.E for information, ULT, 62 Queens Gardens, London W2.

Heartsearch

OLD FRIENDS

DOES LIFE BEGIN AT 40?

MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s

Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, N5 2DB Telephone: 01-226 5432

LEFT-WING, CULTURED, solvent, graduate woman seeks similar unattached man, 55 plus, northern England, lowland Scotland for affectionate companionship. Reply Box (37) 809.

I WANT IT ALL - affection, laughter, good times and good sex, and (possibly) a long-term relationship. I am a professional woman in her 30's, slim, unattached, socialist, with many interests. Edinburgh based. Who are you? Please write to Box (37) 810.

THATCHER-GOVERNMENT-LOATHING academic, male, very young late-fifties, 5'10", usual interests arts, just separated from splendid early-forties lady, would like to meet another, same or older, London/Midlands. Box (37) 811.

ASIAN MARRIAGE AND FRIENDSHIP BUREAU INTERNATIONAL welcomes non-Asians. Multiple advantage. Wider choice. DNSS, 181 Melton Road, Leicester. Phone 0533-610266.

INTELLIGENT, BUSINESS-OWNING, divorced woman, early 50s, wants to meet a warm, honourable and well-educated man. East Anglia. Please write to Box (37) 817.

CAREER WOMAN SOUGHT (any age; preferably child-free) for marriage with partial role-reversal, by man (38) who wants to give up his office job to work from home and enjoys most housework. Willing to relocate anywhere in the U.K., but as I don't drive urban locations with access to railway preferred. Box (37) 818.

ATTRACTIVE, LONDON LADY 50'S wishes to meet socially and politically aware gentleman. Is left of centre, interests theatre, opera, good food and travel for close warm friendship and hopefully more. Non-smoker preferred. Photo please. Replies to Box (37) 819.

MID-LIFE MALE, HANDSOME, intelligent and sensitive, looking for similar woman to share music, theatre, eating, fresh air and arousing conversation. Southampton area. Box (37) 820.

EARLY RETIREMENT next year starts an exercise to find a base possibly somewhere in Corsica or Sardinia. If the idea of a joint venture appeals to a warm enthusiastic solvent 48+ woman do please write. Southport. Please reply to Box (37) 812.

THIS ENGLISH BUSINESSMAN approaching fifty has wayward thoughts of occasional daytime meetings with an adventurous lady for walks, talks, tennis or whatever makes two people happy. No strings, any age. Home Counties. Please write Box (37) 813.

VAN MORRISON, deserted beaches, hot scented nights, passionate politics, bonfires. Kids' jokes, comfortable jeans, midnight movies... warm-hearted momma, brown eyed blond (34) seeks good cook/handyman/lover (or willing to learn) to share it all. Merseyside/ Lancashire. Replies to Box (37) 814.

WEST LONDON woman, tall, warm, affectionate, 37. Enjoys conversation, cinema, live music, swimming wants to meet similarly inclined unattached male. Write Box (37) 815.

WARM ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 42, looking for a man to make magic with. If you are the one and live near North London please write to Box number (37) 816.

MALAYSIAN LADY, 43, tall, attractive, English educated seeks cultured friends, write to Miss Mona Sidhu, DN 132 A off Wise Road, Jalan Dato Linggi Muda, Seremban, code 70100 N.S. Malaysia.

WARM ATTRACTIVE, intelligent woman, 34 - Green outlook - seeks similar man 25 - 40. Likes theatre, cinema, world music, conversation. West Midlands. Please write to Box (37) 821.

Cleopatra met Clark Gable at

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON

THE THINKING PERSON'S INTRODUCTION AGENCY

01-937 8880/938 2151

TALL PROFESSIONAL BLACK MALE, 29, S.E. London, interested in music, politics, and talking, seeks tallish, good looking professional female for long-term relationship. Please write to Box (36) 739.

WANTED: Male friends for companionship. If you want the pleasure of female company without the entanglements of a heterosexual relation- ship, take the plunge and answer this ad. Please write including phone number to Box (36) 807.

EDUCATED PROFESSIONAL MAN, sense of humour, 50-65, sought by warm, petite post-graduate woman, young 50, to share most NS interests during their best years. Please write to Box (36) 808.

AFFECTIONATE MAN, (37) successful in business with wide interests in theatre, literature and travelling, lives in London, currently separated. Seeks new friendships with attractive women aged 25-40. Please reply to: Box (35) 727.

VEGGY AND LONESOME? Wherever you are, ring 01-348 5229 (anytime).

Could you be a Foster Carer to a young black child or brothers and sister?!

Westminster Social Services has a need for foster carers who live within the London area.

Foster carers play an important part in the lives of children in our care. We need people who are interested in working as part of a team in planning for the future of the children. The task may be to help in returning them to their own families or if this is not possible, to prepare them to move on to adopters.

We would like to place children in families who reflect their cultural, religious and racial needs.

Fostering is challenging and demanding but very worthwhile and rewarding. You will recieve financial allowances and ongoing support from specialist workers.

Please do not hesitate to ring us if you would like to discuss the idea of fostering for Westminster. We are available any weekday between 1.30 and 5 pm on 798 3234.

We shall be running preparation groups in the autumn.

For more information on Fostering see pages 26 and 27.

City of Westminster

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3094 Set by P S Burton
Famous moments in British royal history as the *Independent* would have reported them. For those not acquainted with the paper, the issue of Thursday, 31 August contained the following News in Brief on page 2: "*Royal 'separation'*: The Princess Royal and Captain Mark Phillips are to separate, Major Phillips, the captain's father said last night. Buckingham Palace refused to comment. The Princess is in the West Indies and Captain Phillips is in Canada."

In contrast, the *Guardian* ran a 300-word story on page 1 and the *Mirror* spread it over three whole pages including the front.

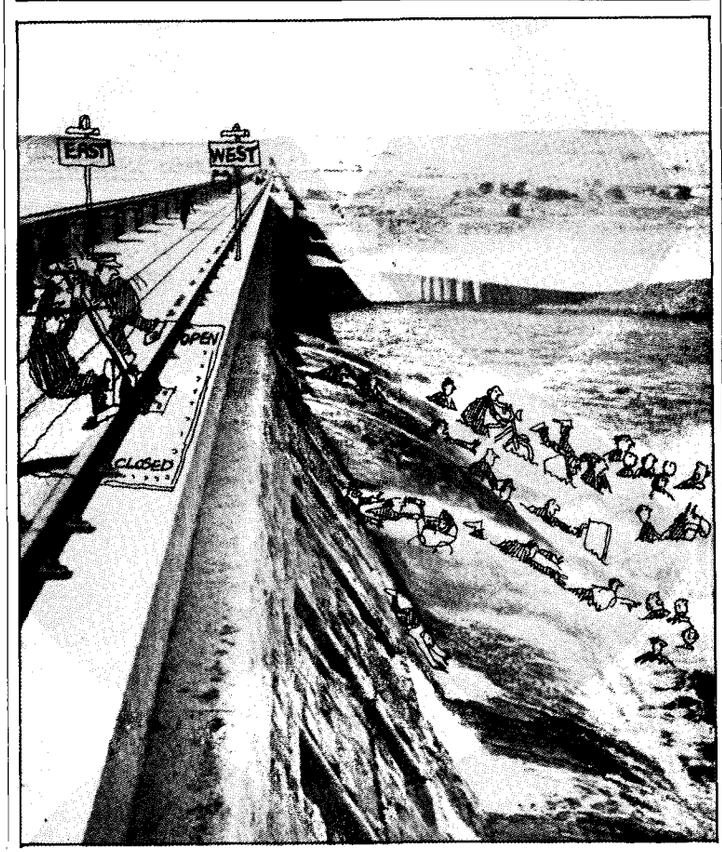
No 3091 Set by Miss Quote
Make up amusing and wholly believable quotes from famous people.

Report by Ms de Meaner
Sometimes I wonder about you lot. Not only did we specify "wholly believable", but we even gave one example of the sort of unbelievable thing we didn't want, just to make absolutely sure you got the point. Eg "*Mrs Thatcher:* I was wrong." This ruled out the following: "That's all right—you're the umpire" (John McEnroe) and "I'm giving you a suspended sentence" (Judge Jeffries). It also ruled out, for different reasons: "At last I'm up to Parr" (Henry VIII); "I want to get ahead" (Salome); and the quite excruciating "I wanna girl just like the girl who married dear ole dad" (Oedipus). So Jim McNeill, J Timson, R J Pickles (twice) and Gerard Benson can all hang their heads in shame. As usual Pascoe Polglaze came up with a stunner: "Yes, I suspected those self-important Common Market people would inevitably pinch it for a signature tune. Still, it might have been SKY!" (Beethoven).

I'm tempted to give all those who understood a prize but will restrict myself to the winners. They can make do with a fiver each.

Jeffrey Archer: When you've written your first masterpiece, the rest comes easy.
Katie Mallett

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



Steve Ovett: I was tempted to take the money and run.
Bernard Doswell

President Bush: Dan Quayle is second to none...
Mrs J Martin

Neil Kinnock: In a word, now.
Cynthia Hall

Neil Kinnock: I didn't say I wanted unilateral disarmament *as such.* That's not really what I meant at all.
Keith Flett

Princess Michael of Kent: Books are meant to be used.
C Fever

Stuart Weir: We'll be able to drop "& Society" after a year or so.
John Stanley

F W De Klerk: If God believed in majority rule, he'd let the angels run heaven.
Naomi Marks

Bishop of Durham: Not everything in the Bible is fiction.

Richard Rogers: People are basically machines for living in buildings.
W J Webster

Andreas Whittam-Smith (Editor, *Independent*): I think one has to be alert to the dangers of excessive enthusiasm.
Nicholas Murray

Robert Runcie: In the charabanc of Christianity God has taken a back seat.
Simon Herbertson

Neil Kinnock: The electorate are not persuaded by hollow rhetoric.
Chas F Garvey

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WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Crossword 1623

PRIZES: £5 book tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1623, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 25 September.

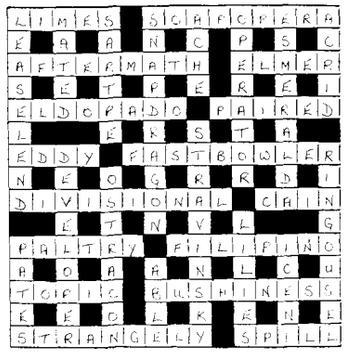
ACROSS

1. Organised science among the people for copy (10)
6. Flower provided by a pointless lot of teachers (4)
9. Recover from cold with solution of novel case (10)
10. Means of access to put the cross back (4)
12. Killing makes one celebrate without sign of delight (12)
15. Free officer back in bunk wounded (7)
16. Sophist as is cut to pieces (7)
17. Farmer who needs credit more frequently? (7)
19. Flourish when there is something for the enthusiast to enjoy? (7)
20. One who expresses feelings publicly gives spirits to a heartless perpetrator of treachery (12)
23. One in three beginners is a pianist (4)
24. Live with what may be struck in advance (10)
25. Toy you twice reduced (4)
26. The accommodation is ordered so nothing matters (10)

DOWN

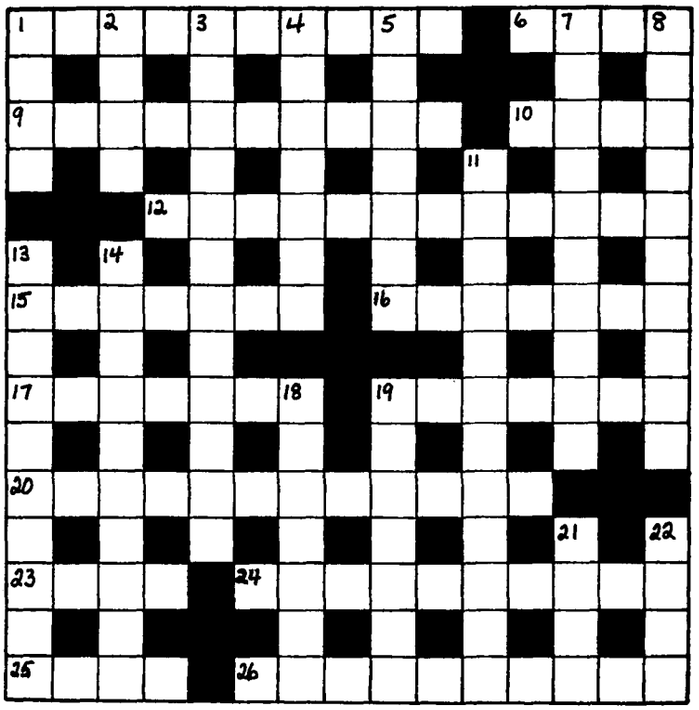
1. Food which makes one start on a fresh course (4)
2. A lot of boats love a river (4)
3. Writing turns up everyone in favour of music, but it is a lot of money (5,7)
4. A country holds some sugar up for an animal (7)
5. Backs a vehicle with style, although the worse for drink (7)
7. To provide free capital and oil is nothing to do with government (10)
8. Assemble when two-thirds of a state is held by the old man (10
11. Dresses up to avoid being neutral? (4,4,4,)
13. Thus I exchange caresses embracing the upstart fatally (10)
14. A bad baron left twice in one month against the rules (10)
18. Twice retired without a place of retirement (7)
19. Using every effort a man rises above everything (4,3)
21. Sculptor who shows love for product of twentieth century? (4)
22. Literature means nothing to people in charge of education (4)

Solution to 1621



Prizewinners to 1621

Danny Bethell
Cardiff, Wales
M Yuill
Nottingham
Megan Rees
Lampeter, Dyfed



september

this month at riverside

Theatre

5 – 16 September 7.30pm

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The Moscow Art Theatre Studio
in
The Crucible
by Arthur Miller
directed by and starring
Brian Cox

Acclaimed post Stalin view of the famous anti McCarthy play. This production is a shard of glasnost do not miss it!

Visual Arts

13 September – 8 October

Selection, Riverside's Artist Group

The group selected work with a wide variety of materials and ideas indicating the diversity of artistic activity within RAG

Kid's Theatre

Our new Autumn season for children begins on Saturday 16 at 2.30pm with a show called **Night Night . . .** Call the education department for further details

Cinema

Check cinema listings for further details

riverside studios

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To the newsagent: **Teachers' Weekly** will be distributed through the London newstrade by Time Out Distribution from September 7. Copies will be available from your wholesaler. If you have any difficulties obtaining a supply, please call Time Out Distribution on 836 4411. Teacher's Weekly is full SOR with a cover price of 65p.

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Rainforest Foundation.

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2. SCARLET MACAWS	XL		
3. LONG-EARED OWL	XL		
4. HARPY EAGLE	XL		
5. IGUANA	XL		
6. AMAZONIAN JAGUAR	XL		
CHILDREN'S T-SHIRTS—£7.50 each			
7. RED-EYED TREE FROG (only) AGE	2-4		
8. RED-EYED TREE FROG (only) AGE	5-8		
DIRECT DONATION TO THE RAINFOREST GROUPS			
		TOTAL	

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